Indian National Congress

REPORT

of the

GENERAL SECRETARIES

Nov. 1946–Dec. 1948

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4286

SAW. GANESAN
KARAIKUDI. S. I. R.

Nov. 1946—Dec. 1948

FOREWORD

We have great pleasure in presenting to the A I. C. C. (as required by Article XIX (c) of the Congress Constitution) the report of the activities of the Congress from Meerut to Jaipur Session.

These two years which the report covers have been momentous in the history of this country and have seen the dawn of freedom for which the Congress had been working and struggling since its inception. There have been many important events during the course of these two years which have been shaped or influenced by the Congress. There were tragic happenings which have disfigured the face of the country and have brought us shame and sorrow. There has also been enacted this year the most ghastly tragedy which has deprived the nation of the irreplaceable leardership of Mahatma Gandhi and has inflicted on the nation and the world a grievous loss which is irreparable.

Many far-reaching decisions have been taken which have changed the course of our chequered history. The Congress itself has undergone a change both in its creed and constitution and has been burdened with the heavy responsibility of conducting the administration of the country since the transfer of power in August 1947. The report deals briefly with most of these matters.

The A. I C. C. Office is expanding and needs more expansion to enable it to cope with the heavy responsibilities that now rest upon the Congress not only as the premier political organisation but as a body whose activities are critically watched and which influence considerably the course of events in the country.

We may also take the liberty of sounding a warning to all those who are within the Congress that unless we become conscious both individually and collectively of our vast responsibilities and rise to the occasion and act in a disciplined and selfless manner, there is a danger of our forfeiting (we shall forfeit) the confidence of the people which we have so long and so amply enjoyed and shall prove unworthy of the Father of the Nation who laid down his life so that the ideals, which he brought round the Congress to accept and which were the source of its strength, may continue to inspire us.

In conclusion we wish to express our gratitude to all our co-workers in the A. I. C. C. Office and office-bearers in the provinces who have, by their readiness to help us, enabled us to discharge our duties, and we take this opportunity of thanking Shri Sadiq Ali who, though no more the Permanent Secretary in the A. I. C. C. Office, was good enough to devote some days in helping us to prepare this somewhat lengthy report.

The audited Statement of Accounts for the period 1st October 1945 to 30th September 1947 is shown separately.

JAIPUR
16 Dec. 1948

SHANKARRAO DEO
JUGAL KISHORE

The Meerut Congress

It was six and a half years after the Ramgarh Session that the Congress met at Meerut on 23rd and 24th November 1946 for its 54th Session. These six and a half years were important and eventful years in the history of the Congress and India. They witnessed two struggles, one, the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement in 1941 and the other the famous 'Quit India' struggle which lasted for well-nigh three years. During these years, the world war raged in all its fury and India was dragged into it against the will of her people. Resistance to this imposition and much else brought on it measureless suffering. Through this suffering the Indian people demonstrated their passionate desire to gain freedom.

Meeting as the Congress did after such a long interval it was naturally the desire of the U.P. P.C.C. and the Reception Committee to make arrangements for a large multitude of visitors. There was abundant evidence of a widespread desire on the part of the public to attend the session but events happened which greatly upset the arrangements and obliged the Reception Committee to cut out a considerable proportion of visitors. There were communal disturbances in some parts of the country. Their extension to Meerut and the neighbouring area dislocated normal life in Meerut and seriously affected the arrangements the Reception Committee were making for holding the Session on a grand scale.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The Meerut Session met under the presidentship of Acharya J.B. Kripalani. In his presidential address, Acharya Kripalani brought out the political and economic implications of the Swaraj which the Congress had been working for under the leadership of Gandhiji. Democracy to be effective, he explained, must be

based on non-violence and decentralised industry. That alone would ensure the rule of the people and avoid the concentration of power, political or economic, in the hands of the few.

CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

The Meerut Session considered and passed a number of resolutions dealing with important events and issues. The first resolution it considered and passed was one on 'Retrospect'(1). It reiterated its adherence to the ideals and principles for which the Congress had stood throughout its career and which guided and controlled her struggle for freedom. These principles encountered many a challenge from many quarters and the Congress has had to proclaim and vindicate them time and again. The six and half years that intervened between the two sessions of the Congress had exposed the country and the people to the influence of many communal and reactionary forces. The British Raj functioned with unmitigated vigour during these years and with it all the forces hostile to the aspirations of the people. The Meerut Congress therefore in its very first resolution(2) reiterated its faith 'in the high destiny of India and the ideals which have moved the Indian people'. The Congress reiterated 'its firm determination to continue the struggle for India's complete freedom till she becomes an independent nation co-operating with others on an equal basis for the establishment of peace, freedom and progress everywhere'. The Congress 'has based itself on high ideals and endeavoured to put before the nation moral standards of conduct both on the individual and on the political plane because it was convinced that greatness of achievement comes to a nation only by keeping high objectives before it and by pursuing methods which are worthy of a great people'.

The Congress Working Committee on release from prison in June 1945 entered into negotiations with the representatives of

(1) Ref: Resolution dated 23rd November, 1946, Page 14, Bulletin No. 1, 1497
(2) Ref: " " " " 15 " "

the British Government finally resulting in the establishment of an Interim Central Government and the summoning of the Constituent Assembly empowered to draw up a Constitution for a free and independent India. The Congress considered these negotiations and political developments connected with them and ratified the decisions taken thereon from time to time by the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C.

Among the resolutions passed by the Session was one on 'Communal Strife '(1). The Muslim League politics of hatred and violence and the two-nation theory produced a most distressing situation in the country. It is not usual for hatred and ill-will to remain within restricted bounds. They have a tendency to spread, grow and finally lead to violence and brutality. Communal hatred and antagonism were being preached and practised in their most virulent form at just the same time when the British rule in India was in its final stage of dissolution. Barbarous tragedies happened in Calcutta, in East Bengal, in Bihar and some parts of the Meerut District. Unspeakable acts of brutality were committed on men, women and children. There were murders on a mass scale, abduction and violation of women and mass conversions enforced in inhuman ways. There was an end to all sense of security in areas where these tragedies happened. The Meerut Congress considered the situation arising out of this communal strife and warned the country against all propaganda of hate and violence against revenge and reprisals. " The responsibility for this widespread brutality " it said in its resolution on ' Communal Strife', "must rest with the preaching of hatred and violence for political purposes and the degradation and exploitation of religion for political ends. Responsibility must also rest with those who claim to possess special responsibilities and who in spite of warning failed to discharge them and allowed matters to

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(1) Ref. Resolution dated 23rd—24th Nov. 1946, Page 19, Bulletin 1, 1947.

proceed to the extreme limit of endurance." The resolution emphasised the need for producing a sense of security and rehabilitating homes and villages which had been broken up and destroyed.

The Congress also passed an important resolution on 'States'*. The process of transfer of power from British to Indian hands was in operation but the problem of the States was giving some anxious moments to the Congress. The Congress had always considered the struggle for freedom in the States an essential part of the larger struggle in India. The popular representatives had undertaken responsibility for the Government of India but the Political Department was segregated from this responsibility and became the exclusive charge of the Viceroy. This department continued to function in a manner which was opposed to the wishes of the people and hostile to their aspirations. The Congress expressed its strong disapproval of this arrangement and the activities of the Political Department. It warned the rulers against the continuance of their autocratic regimes and the consequences of their unwillingness to establish representative institutions responsible to the people in their States.

CABINET MISSION'S STATEMENT OF MAY 16 AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS

The Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16 was the solution of the Indo-British and Communal problems to which the Congress, the Muslim League and the British Government agreed. What remained was the actual implementation of the scheme embodied in the May Statement. But hardly was the scheme agreed to by the the parties concerned when a fresh chapter of controversy opened which dragged on for some months till it resulted in the substantial abandonment of the scheme and the partition of the country. The controversy related to Paragraph

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* Ref. Resolution dated 23rd-24th Nov 1946. Page 17 Bulletin, No. 1 1947.

19, (5) and (8) of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16 about sections. It runs as follows:—

GROUPING OF PROVINCES

19(5): These sections shall proceed to settle provincial constitutions for the provinces included in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for those provinces and, if so, with what provincial subjects the group should deal. Provinces should have the power to opt out of the Groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause 8 below:

Paragraph 19(8): As soon as the new constitutional agreements have come into operation, it shall be open to any province to elect to come out of any group in which it has been placed. Such decision shall be taken by the Legislature of the province after the first General Election under the new Constitution.

OBJECTIONS TO GROUPING

In their resolution(1) on the Statement of May 16, the Working Committee pointed out the discrepancy between the paragraph 19 and other vital provisions in the Statement. The Statement of the Cabinet Delegation affirmed the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the provinces. Also the formation of groups by provinces was not made compulsory. But paragraph 19 laid down that provincial representatives would divide up into sections which 'shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for the provinces.' This introduced a measure of compulsion which clearly infringed the basic principle of provincial autonomy. The Working Committee therefore made it plain that in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Paragraph 15 should be read to mean that the provinces were free to make their choice whether or not to belong to the sections in which

(1) Ref. Resolution W. C. Dec. 8, '46 Bulletin 1, '47, page 28.

they were placed. This is how the Working Committee interpreted clause 19 but the Cabinet Delegation did not agree with this interpretation. They issued a statement in which they gave their own interpretation which was that the initial grouping of provinces was compulsory and that it would be these groups which would settle provincial constitutions.

The Congress made it clear that their objection was not to provinces entering sections but to compulsory grouping and the possibility of a province framing a constitution for another province entirely against the wishes of the latter. 'This might', the Working Committee pointed out in one of its resolutions(1) 'result in the framing of rules, the regulation of franchise, electorates, constituencies for elections and the composition of the Legislature which might seriously prejudice or even nullify the provision for a province subsequently to opt out of a group'.

The Working Committee objected to the British Government or any agency on its behalf issuing any interpretations on the Cabinet Delegation's Statement of May 16. They maintained the position that au hors of a document have no right to interpret it. Any other position would lead to much confusion and possible mischief. Nevertheless, first the Cabinet delegation, and then the Prime Minister of England himself, went out of their way to interpret certain portions of the document and added to the difficulties and complications of the situation in the country. All disputed points the Congress was prepared to refer to the Federal Court for final decision.

The Constituent Assembly was scheduled to meet at Delhi on 9th December 1946, but in the meantime, on the invitation of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Baldev Singh had to proceed to England. Lord

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(1) Ref. Res. W. C. Dec. 8, '46 Congress Bulletin No. 1, 1947, page 29.

Wavell and Mr. M.A. Jinnah also attended the London Conference of Congress, Muslim League and Sikh leaders and the British Government. The Conference ended on the 6th December, 1946 and on the same date the British Government issued its statement elucidating its previous statement of May, 1946.

The Working Committee considered the British Government's Statement of December 6 and issued a comprehensive statement(1) in which it further clarified its position with reference to matters in dispute. As this controversy threatened to undo the whole scheme as outlined in the Statement of May 16, it was considered desirable to refer the matter to the A.I.C.C. and seek its final direction.

The A.I.C.C. endorsing the statement of the Working Committee said that while it realised the difficulties placed in the way of some provinces, notably, Assam and the N.W.F.P. by the British Government's latest interpretation, it was nevertheless anxious that the Constituent Assembly should proceed with the work of framing a constitution for free India with the goodwill of all parties concerned. With a view therefore to removing the difficulties that had arisen owing to varying interpretations it advised action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the sections. This should of course involve no compulsion. In the event of any such compulsion the province affected had a right to take such action as it deemed necessary for giving effect to the wishes of the people.

It was hoped that this resolution(2) of the A.I.C.C. would finally end the controversy and open the way for the participation and co-operation of the Muslim League in the Constituent Assembly. The British press too appreciated the generous and conciliatory gesture of the Congress. Mr. Jinnah and the

(1)Ref. Page 28, Bulletin No. 1, 1947

(2)Ref. Resolution A.I.C.C., Delhi 5 & 6 Jan. '47, Page 8 Bulletin No, 2, 1947.

Muslim League however seemed determined not to co-operate in the Constituent Assembly and continued to work for Pakistan. They perhaps accepted the Cabinet Plan of May 16 in the hope of turning the two sections in the East and West of India into virtual Pakistan even though it might involve the virtual extinction of provincial autonomy.

This again created a deadlock. The Constituent Assembly met but the League members were absent. The work the Assembly did attracted a considerable amount of attention but the absence of the League was not a factor that could be ignored specially in the background of the British policy. The Congress effort to get the Muslim League to co-operate in the work of constitution-making had failed.

BRITISH GOVT'S FRESH ANNOUNCEMENT AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

In February 1947 the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee made an important pronouncement in the House of Commons. He announced that it was 'their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948'. According to the scheme of May 16, the British Government agreed 'to recommend to Parliament a Constitution worked out in accordance with the proposals made therein by a fully representative Constituent Assembly. But if it should appear that such a Constitution will not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly, before the time mentioned in Paragraph 7, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing provincial governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people',

This was an important pronouncement which changed the political landscape of India. The portions as quoted here from the Premier's Statement were a definite encouragement to the Muslim League to persist in their obstructive tactics and intensify their propaganda for Pakistan. The February Statement was however welcomed in that a time-limit was set for the termination of foreign rule. This Statement of the British Government while it greatly eased the political tension, considerably aggravated the communal situation. The Congress Working Committee welcomed the declaration by the British Government of their definite intention to leave India by June. This declaration however threw a grave responsibility on the people of India and their representatives. Would the transfer of power be on a peaceful and co-operative basis or would it be attended by trouble and strife? The Constituent Assembly opened the way for a peaceful transfer of power but the work of the Constituent Assembly was essentially voluntary. Any group or party could non-co-operate with it and make its task difficult. The Working Committee however made it clear that the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly would apply to those areas which accepted it. No province or part of a province could be compelled to join the Indian Union. The Committee once again urged the Muslim League to participate in the Constitution-making in as much as it had met to the maximum extent possible the fears and apprehensions of the Muslim League.

The Working Committee did not rest content with a mere general appeal to the Muslim League for co-operation knowing full well that the attitude of the Muslim League especially in the recent past had been far from helpful and co-operative. The Working Committee passed a separate* resolution inviting the Muslim League to nominate representatives to meet representatives of the Congress in order to consider the situation that had arisen from the British Government's latest statement and take

*Resolution—March 6 '47—Ref. Bulletin 3 of March 47

necessary steps to meet it. It was hoped that if their invitation was accepted in the spirit in which it was extended and the Muslim League sent its representatives, a way out of the unfortunate tangle which the Constituent Assembly had got into might be discovered and a way opened for the final transfer of power in a peaceful and cooperative manner. There was however no response to the invitation. The Muslim League saw the good of the country in not parleying with the Congress at all. It perhaps saw that not by persuasion and argument could it achieve the object it had in view. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the General Secretary of the Muslim League, replied to the General Secretary of the Congress that the letter of invitation would be placed before the Working Committee of the Muslim League when it met but he could say nothing as to the date of this meeting as negotiations were going on with the Viceroy. This evasive reply made it fully clear that there was no intention on the part of the Muslim League to settle constitutional and political issues by discussion and negotiation. It saw great advantage in carrying on independent separate negotiations with the Viceroy direct.

FEBRUARY STATEMENT AND LEAGUE REACTION

The February Statement of the British Government gave a new and most painful turn to the communal situation in the country. The Muslim League seized on the portion of the Statement which said that the powers of the Central Government would be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas, to the existing provincial governments, and exploited it to the full. This encouraged the Muslim League in the belief that if as many provinces as could be brought under the influence and control of the Muslim League were so brought the British would hand over those provinces to them when the final date for relinquishing their authority arrived. Bengal and Sind were the

two provinces which were effectively under their control. In the Frontier it was a purely Congress ministry and in the Punjab it was the Unionist ministry composed of representatives of all communities. The League was anxious and the February Statement made the anxiety frantic, that these provinces should somehow, by any means, come under the domination of the Muslim League. The Pakistan the League contemplated and strove for, included Assam too and that for no other reason than that they wanted Assam. It would increase the territories of Pakistan and give it another strategic frontier. The Muslim League now set itself to creating conditions in the Frontier, the Punjab and Assam which would give the League the controlling voice in the affairs of these provinces. In Assam they created or rather aggravated the problem of emigrants. The Muslim League and even the Provincial League Government were encouraging Bengali Muslims to migrate to Assam and increase the Muslim population of the province. Increased Muslim population and manipulation of the tribal areas in the province could create a situation gravely endangering the security of the Congress Government in the province. The Assam Government took steps to stop migration and otherwise normalise and stabilise the situation in the province. This gave an opportunity to the Muslim League to cry 'Islam in danger' in Assam and carry on a fierce communal propaganda against the Congress and the Congress Government. The Congress Government was able to bring the situation under its control because, among other things it had the full support and sympathy of the indigenous Muslim population in its efforts to check and frustrate the undeclared invasion of the Muslim League. In the Frontier Province a wild campaign of abuse and vilification against the Congress and Khudai Khidmatgars was set in motion. In the Frontier, Muslim League had a grouse not against the Hindus and Sikhs but against Muslims themselves who were in the Congress. The communal passions however were directed against the small

and helpless minorities of Hindus and Sikhs. There was murder, arson and loot on an ever increasing scale in the Frontier. Hindus and Sikhs found themselves fleeing in sheer panic and terror. The Congress Government, the Congress Organisation and the Khudai Khidmatgars did all they could to allay panic and save the minorities but all they did, could not fully avail against the force of disorder and anarchy released by the Muslim League and its vicious propaganda.

DISTURBANCES IN THE PUNJAB

The Punjab which hitherto enjoyed communal peace when there were disturbances elsewhere in the country was now to earn the distinction of being the scene of the gravest communal disaster in the history of communal trouble in the country. Ever since the formation of a mixed ministry in the province after the 1946 elections under the leadership of Khizr Hayat Khan, the Muslim League has been nourishing a grievance against it. Though it (the Muslim League) was the largest single party in the Punjab Assembly it did not have a majority nor could it form a majority by combining with some other groups in the Assembly It inspired profound distrust in other groups and parties in the Assembly. The February Statement of the British Government made the Muslim League frantic with anxiety as to the future of the province or rather its own future in the province. If when the day arrived for the final transfer of power, the non-League ministry continued to be in power, there was little hope of the League succeeding the Britisher when the latter quitted This Ministry, therefore, must be broken and overthrown. The constitutional remedy was no good as immediate results were desired. And immediate results could only be obtained by reccourse to extra-constitutional methods. Even though hitherto there were no communal disturbances in the province the atmosphere was surcharged with communal suspicion and distrust. The

political ambitions of the Muslim League could be realised only through the exploitation of communal passions of the Muslims. The Muslim League launched an agitation both against the Congress Government in the Frontier and the mixed non-League Government in the Punjab. The agitation was launched on the ostensible plea of safeguarding civil liberties but the real object was to discredit, weaken and destroy the two ministries. The Services including the Governors both in the Punjab and Frontier were sympathetic to and tolerant of this agitation. Whatever measures it was asked to adopt for suppressing the agitation were either evaded or very imperfectly and luke-warmly applied. The agitators worked freely and disobeyed bans recklessly without incurring the penalties which such disobedience involved. Several hundreds were of course arrested but their life in prison was far different from that lived by political prisoners under the British regime. The situation created by the agitation was uncomfortable for Khizr Hayat Khan who specially became the target of bitter attacks by the Muslim League and the Muslims under its influence. Khizr Hayat Khan saw safety in resigning his premiership and he resigned. The Muslim League now saw its chance for forming the ministry but so deep and frantic was the opposition it had aroused against itself among non-Muslims that no effort it made to woo the Sikhs and the Congress yielded any results. The Muslim League used all its resources to form a ministry but the non-League parties and groups showed themselves determined not to let a League Ministry be formed and a pure communal raj established in the province. All this finally led to widespread violence. There was an orgy of murder and arson, and Amritsar and Multan became scenes of horror and devastation.

The Working Committee at their meeting in early March considered the tragic situation in the Punjab. They expressed the opinion that no settlement of the problems in the Punjab

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was possible by violence and coercion. In their opinion a way out which would involve the least amount of compulsion would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces so that the predominantly Muslim part might be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

This resolution* of the Working Committee was not liked by the Muslim League—it wanted the whole of the Punjab—but it expressed the feelings and desire of the non-Muslim inhabitants of the Punjab. Only in the partition of their province they saw hope of deliverance from naked communal rule and all that it meant.

PARTITION OF INDIA
June 3rd Plan

It was perhaps expected by the British Government that their statement of February 1947 would greatly ease the situation in India. It had a reverse effect at any rate so far as the communal situation was concerned. The latter was gravely worsened. The Muslim League used the February statement not for settling with the Congress peacefully and co-operatively but for creating conditions by coercion and intimidation in which certain decisions could be made in its favour. This produced a dangerous situation in many provinces. The time-limit laid down by the British Government for the relinquishment of its authority in India though not long was in the context of the activities of the Muslim League and people under their influence found dangerously long. The British Government therefore issued another statement in June 1947 in which they set out a plan for ascertaining the wishes of the people of India in provinces or areas where the Muslims were in a majority.

The British Cabinet also announced their decision to anticipate the date of June 1948 for the handing over of power. They proposed to introduce legislation during the current

* Ref. Resolution Delhi, March 6, 7, 8, 1947, Bulletin No. 3 Page 5

session for the transfer of power this year on a Dominion status basis to one or two succession authorities according to the decisions taken as a result of the June announcement.

Before the announcement was made the Viceroy had detailed consultations with leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League and others and the plan contained in the announcement had the general approval of the Congress and the Muslim League. The Congress had to choose between partition and continuance of a state of affairs which was becoming more and more intolerable. The Muslim League entered the Central Interim Government not in a co-operative mood and after an agreement with the Congress. While the Congress Ministers emphasised in their actions and speeches the principle of joint responsibility the League members disowned it and proclaimed their loyalty to the Viceroy whose appointees and nominees they considered themselves to be. The League members would refuse even to attend informal meetings of the Cabinet. This of course gave added importance to the Viceroy who could, if and when he wanted it, exploit the division. The League members thought and spoke and acted in terms of Hindustan and Pakistan while the Congress members spoke and acted in the terms of the unity and strength and welfare of the whole of India. This division was reflected in the whole administrative machinery and that was a dangerous thing. If the Civil Services, the Police and the Army became divided in their loyalty and their members functioned on communal lines, nothing but mischief and chaos in the administration could result. And this was happening. This was a dangerous situation and any indefinite prolongation of it could not be contemplated with equanimity. For the Muslim League this situation was in the nature of pressure tactics for its demand for Pakistan.

This was not all. The ever-increasing and ever-deepening chain of communal disturbances involving mass murder, arson and loot accompanied by unthinkable atrocities and horrors obliged the Working Committee to consider the whole communal and political situation afresh. The Congress did not, it was obvious, desire the unity of India to be broken up, but it could not also countenance the grave communal disturbances and the consequent worsening of the communal situation in turn leading to greater disturbances. The 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British Government and the two nation theory of the Muslim League had engendered the spirit of communal hatred and antagonism which it was not easy to liquidate. The only way out of the prevailing communal disorders and the prospect of more and worse disorders appeared to be the division of India. Accordingly, the proposal embodied in the Statement of June 3 were most of them agreed to beforehand by the Congress leadership. The proposal about the Frontier was one to which the Congress had not agreed to. The Working Committee was strongly of opinion that opinion in the Frontier with regard to secession from India should be ascertained exactly in the manner which was laid down for the Punjab and Bengal. The Working Committee agreed with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan that the people of the Frontier under his leadership were free not to participate in the plebiscite as contemplated in the June Statement and recorded its disagreement with the policy laid down in it with regard to the Frontier.

The Statement of June 3 could not be finally endorsed by the Working Committee without a reference being made to the A.I.C.C. * and its opinion obtained. Accordingly a meeting of the A.I.C.C. was called to consider the Statement.

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*(1) Ref. Resolution W.C. Delhi, June 14&15, 1917 Page 28, Bulletin 9, 194.

A.I.C.C. APPROVES PARTITION

The A.I.C.C. which met in Delhi on 15 June 1947 welcomed the decision of the British Government to transfer power completely to the Indian people by next August. It declared that 'in view of the refusal of the Muslim League to accept the plan of May 16 and to participate in the Constituent Assembly and further in view of the policy of the Congress that "it cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in Indian Union against their declared and established will", the A.I.C.C. accepts the proposals embodied in the announcement of June 3, which have laid down a procedure for ascertaining the will of the people concerned.' The A.I.C.C. declared that in view of the circumstances prevailing in the country it accepted the possibility of certain parts of India seceding from it. The A.I.C.C. accepted this possibility even though the Congress had upheld the unity and indivisibility of India ever since its inception. The A.I.C.C. trusted that when present passions subsided India's problems would be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations would be discredited and discarded by all.

The A.I.C.C. resolution was not passed without a keen and impassioned debate. Almost all members from the Pakistan area opposed the resolution in feeling terms, so also many Muslim members. Babu Purshottamdas Tandon lent his support to the opposition. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel explained the circumstances in which they found themselves obliged to agree to the dismemberment of India and their explanation carried considerable weight with the A.I.C.C. It was well known that Gandhiji did not favour partition. He was invited by the Congress President to address the A.I.C.C. meeting. Gandhiji advised the A.I.C.C. to accept the decision of the Working Committee. He was one of those who had been steadfastly opposed to the division but

to-day the public was not with him. The A.I.C.C., he said, could reject the resolution if they could find a new set of leaders who could not only constitute the Congress Working Committee but also take charge of the Government. He expressed his confidence that good would emerge from the partition. The Socialists kept neutral, partly because Gandhiji himself accepted the Working Committee's decision and partly because there was no deep or widespread public opposition to partition. The grim events of the past few months led the public to accept what in other circumstances it would have stoutly opposed. The A.I.C.C. accepted the Working Committee's resolution by large majority.

STATES AFTER THE LAPSE OF BRITISH PARAMOUNTCY

The Muslim League and its politics were a major headache for the Congress. The Congress found itself obliged to agree to the division of India. There was, also another quarter from which trouble was expected and fissiparous tendencies flowed, viz, the States. A good many of these states, among them important ones, read aright the signs of the times and saw wisdom in uniting their separate destinies with the larger destiny of India and work for the larger good of the country. They joined the Constituent Assembly and associated themselves with its work. There were however States like Travancore and Hyderabad which saw in the situation, created by the disappearance of British rule in India, an opportunity for declaring and asserting their sovereignty and independence and treating themselves as equals of the Indian Government. Travancore, through its Dewan invented extraordinarily ingenious arguments for up—holding its imaginary sovereignty. The Statement of 16th May envisaged the Indian Union as consisting of provinces and states. If any state chose not to enter into any federal relationship with the Indian Union, it would enter into other political arrangement

with it so that the unity and integrity of India might be preserved. This clearly implied that the lapse of British paramountcy was not intended to lead to a vacuum. All the facts of geography, defence, foreign affairs, internal communications pointed to the sovereignty of India and the subordination of the states to it whatever the exact legal position which the lapse of British Paramountcy might leave the States in.

The A.I.C.C considered* the question of Indian States as it arose in the new context. The A.I.C.C. made it clear 'that the privileges and obligations as well as the subsisting rights as between the states and the Government of India cannot be adversely affected by the lapse of paramountcy. The lapse of paramountcy did not exhaust the relationship between the States and the Government. The existing relationship had to be renewed or changed by mutual agreement. The problem did not end there. It was customary for the princes to look at the problems as though they constituted the States. Considering the spirit that underlay the document of June 16 and the memorandum of 12th May, the people of the States should have a dominating voice in all decisions affecting them. Then there was another vital consideration which had to be kept in view. The arrangements made under British Paramountcy dealt with the security of India as a whole. No state could now cut itself adrift from the Centre and imperil the defence of India.

Keeping all these considerations in view, the A.I.C.C. decided that it could not admit the right of any state in India to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India. That would be a denial of the course of Indian history and of the objectives of the Indian people to day.

N.W.F.P. AND PARTITION.

The possibility of partition having now been finally agreed to by the Congress, Muslim League and the British Government,

* Ref. Resolution Delhi June 14 and 15, 1947 Page 7, Bulletin No. 4.

it was considered expedient and wise to take the speediest steps possible to make necessary arrangements for ascertaining the public opinion in the Muslim majority provinces and areas. There was little trouble in ascertaining opinion in Sind, Bengal and the Punjab. There was a keen controversy about the Frontier. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgars and the provincial Congress did not participate in the plebiscite on the ground, among others, that the plebiscite raised a communal issue, which was false and unreal. The Pathans under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had never thought and acted in terms of Hindu India or Muslim Pakistan. They had a nationalist outlook. They did not like partition. They hated the Muslim League and its policies. The choice between Hiudu India and Muslim Pakistan that the decision of the British Government confronted them with was a mischievous and perverse decision. It gave an opportunity to the Muslim League and the frankly communal administration to exploit the ignorance, credulity and fanaticism of the masses. Besides, there was no good reason why, as in Punjab and Bengal, the elected members of the Provincial Legislature in the Frontier should not be allowed to decide by a simple majority the issue of separation. The N. W. F. P. was deliberately chosen for a different treatment. The Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars in the Frontier abstained from participating in the plebiscite and asked the people to do likewise. They ended the India versus Pakistan controversy by declaring that they wanted an independent Pathanistan, free to decide its own destiny. That was the issue which they placed before the electorate. But they had to work against heavy odds, the whole administrative machinery from the Governor downward working against them. The Muslim League as was its wont raised false cries and false issues and misled the public. The plebiscite was held. There were complaints from the Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars of coercion and intimidation and other malpractices but no heed was paid to them. The result was declared in favour of secession.

BENGAL AND PUNJAB PARTITIONED

Bengal and Punjab voted in favour of partition, the Muslim part going into Pakistan and the non-Muslim part remaining with India. Sylhet voted for inclusion in Pakistan. Baluchistan was manoeuvred by British diplomacy and League tactics into voting for joining Pakistan.

The British Parliament passed a measure whereby the Dominions of India and Pakistan were created. They were to function as such from August 15, 1947. August 15 thus became a memorable day in the history of India. On this day ended our slavery and the deadweight of British imperialism was lifted from our land. Lord Mountbatten ceased to be the Viceroy and Governor General of India. If he still continued as such it was by the wish and will of the Indian Cabinet.

15th AUGUST 1947.

The ending of British rule was an event of historic and world significance. The joy of this hard-won freedom was marred by the division of India which accompanied it. The division however did not detract from the significance of the great event. India was now enabled not only to shape her own internal destiny but play her due role in shaping the destiny of the world. August 15 ended one era and began another pregnant with great possibilities for the good, especially, of the common man.

The Working Committee called upon the people of India to celebrate 15th August fittingly and with due solemnity. A public holiday was proclaimed on this day. The National Flag was hoisted on public and private buildings. Large public meetings were held in all towns and cities of India and in many villages also. The people resolved on this day to dedicate themselves anew to the service of India. The celebrations all over the country were marked by great warmth and enthusiasm. The

whole administration which hitherto had been engaged in suppressing India's struggle for freedom took an active part in the celebrations.

As was to be expected, Delhi was the principal centre of the Independence Celebrations. The capital witnessed on August 15 scenes which in some of their features were unparallelled in her long and chequered history. The celebrations began with the swearing in of the Governor General, Lord Mountbatten, of the Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru and other Ministers at 9 A. M. on 15th. At midnight, the Constituent Assembly assumed sovereign power and members took the following pledge:—

"At this solemn moment when the people of India, through suffering and sacrifice, have secured freedom, I,............................ ....a member of the Constituent Assembly of India, do dedicate myself in all humility to the service of India and her people to the end that this ancient land attain her rightful and honoured place in the world and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind"

At the last stroke of midnight, there was blowing of conches and a full-throated cry of 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai', a fitting tribute to the main architect of India's freedom. The President of the Constituent Assembly proposed that it should be intimated to the Viceroy that 'the Constituent Assembly of India has assumed power for the governance of India.' On the 15th August, there were many public and official functions to celebrate the dawn of Independence. There were record public gatherings running into lakhs for saluting the flag and participating in other ceremonies. The night was converted into day by illuminations.

GANDHIJI AND THE COMMUNAL SITUATION

India had numerous and intricate problems to solve and the freedom it attained on August 15 provided an opportunity

to solve them. The major obstacle to the proper and effective solution of these problems was communal disharmony and the demand for the partition of the country to which it finally led. The Congress having agreed under pressure of circumstances to this partition it was hoped that the country would be rid of communal disharmony and the Indian Government would set itself seriously to tackle our social and economic problems. This hope however was not realised. Partition came by mutual agreement but the course of events which led to it had filled people's minds and hearts with such distrust and suspicion of one another that communal harmony could not be the immediate outcome of an agreement, under the compulsion of events, at the top. The communal infection had spread to the common man, penetrating his mind so that he became a temporary pervert. Cruelty for him turned into glory and treachery, arson, loot, murder, dishonouring of women, and killing of children became a moral imperative. This situation was exceedingly painful and distressing to Gandhiji and he pitted his whole vast moral might against it. The elemental passions of men were in action and Government and public organisations were very often helpless against their fury. Gandhiji, however, brought to bear on the situation the magic of non-violence, of his unique self—suffering and intense faith in moral values and brought sanity and reason to our maddened people at numerous places in India.

He was in Bihar for scarcely a week, when urgent calls from the Congress President and Pandit Nehru brought him to Delhi. Here, in Delhi, Gandhiji tendered advice to the Working Committee and our leaders in the Central Government on all political matters referred to him. But what continued to be uppermost in his mind was the communal madness that was raging now here and now there in the country. In his addresses at the prayer meetings, his never-ending theme was Hindu-Muslim Unity and an early end to the butchery that was going on in the name of Hinduism and Islam.

PUNJAB AND FRONTIER

The worst was yet to come. The Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who had hitherto lived in peace and amity in the Punjab broke out into a frenzy of communal madness in Lahore, Amritsar, Gurgaon, Rawalpindi etc. Later investigations revealed how the British element in the Services in the Punjab had actively encouraged and abetted this communal frenzy.

THE CALCUTTA MIRACLE

Gandhiji was in Calcutta in August 1947. He was on his way to Noakhali but reports of preparations for rioting on a big scale on August 15 and much else kept him in Calcutta. His presence had a miraculous effect on the situation.

On the 14th and 15th August were witnessed scenes of fraternisation between Hindus and Muslims which reminded one of the early days of the Khilafat Movement. Hindus and Muslims embraced one another in the streets of Calcutta in their thousands. They passed freely through streets which were considered dangerous by one party or the other. Muslims were taken to Mandirs by their Hindu brethren and the latter were taken to Masjids.

GANDHIJI'S FAST

But unfortunately this communal peace threatened to break up some time later, and Gandhiji undertook a fast on September 4. Bengal was stirred. There was a quick change in the atmosphere and the situation, and the leaders of both communities hastened to convey assurances to the Mahatma that peace would be preserved. Gandhiji broke his fast when he felt assured that the needed change had taken place. During the time that Mahatma fasted, Hindu and Muslim volunteers worked without rest. Many rioters surrendered themselves to Gandhiji.

THE AFTERMATH OF PARTITION

The meetings of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. that were held in November 1947 were highly

important meetings. The weeks and months that elapsed since August 15, were crowded with events some of which shook the very foundation of the state and civilized society. The partition was effected and the many problems connected with it were being tackled. The civil services and the Army were being partitioned practically on communal basis. All this was work for people at the top and for officials but the people were no passive spectators of the partition in action. Instead of allaying passions partition seemed to intensify and aggravate them.

TRANSFER OF POPULATION IN THE PUNJAB.

When it was found that no man, woman or child belonging to a minority community was safe whether in East Punjab or West Punjab the two Central Cabinets of India and Pakistan decided that the wisest course to adopt in the circumstances would be to arrange for wholesale and total transfer of non-Muslims from West Punjab to East Punjab and India. They also arranged for facilities to be made available for speedy evacuation and safe escort of the minority population.

But this evacuation on a mass scale gave rise to other formidable problems which taxed the wit and resources of our leaders and the Indian Government to the uttermost. Lakhs of refugees who streamed into India had to be provided with food, shelter, clothing and finally a permanent means of livelihood. Refugees came not only from West Punjab but also from North West Frontier, Baluchistan and Sind.

EVACUATION FROM N. W. F.P., SIND AND BALUCHISTAN.

The League's hatred and violence however spared none. The tiny Hindu and Sikh minority became its special target,

They were looted, robbed and killed. The Sikhs and Hindus sought safety only in flight and evacuation. They swelled the ranks of refugees in India. Baluchistan was a backward province. It had been cut off from the main stream of India's political and social progress. But the Muslim League's hymn of hate was also sung there and Hindus and Sikhs began to leave Baluchistan and seek shelter in India. The situation in Sind too was steadily deteriorating.

HAPPENINGS IN INDIAN UNION.

It therefore came to this that barring East Bengal, refugees were pouring into India from all parts of Pakistan and the Indian Government had to provide for their food and shelter. It should be remembered that in India too horrible things happened and the Muslim minority was in fear and trepidation after partition. The East Punjab was the scene of many mass brutalities. The outraged Hindus and Sikhs took their full measure of revenge on Muslims and indulged in mass-killing and mass-loot. Women were dishonoured freely. Lawlessness prevailed in many parts of East Punjab. There were many States in the Punjab, parts of Rajputana and Central India where Muslims were the helpless victims of brutal outrages and they fled from the States in sheer terror and panic. The madness could have spread to other parts of India but thanks to Gandhiji, our Central and Provincial Governments which were avowedly secular, democratic and non-communal and the Congress organisation with its sixty years old tradition of freedom from any communal partisanship, the madness received a stern check. Large parts of India, notably the whole of South remained unaffected. If figures can be our guide, only 3 per cent of the entire population of India was affected by the prevailing hysteria.

A. I. C. C.'s CONDEMNATION OF COMMUNAL FANATICISM.

The Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. met in November 1947, to consider the situation created by communal fanaticism both in Pakistan and India, and the problem of refugees and connected matters.

It was necessary to reiterate the faith and the fundamental policies of the Congress in view of the doubts that were being cast upon it by the prevailing communal hysteria and the anger and bitterness which refugees brought in their hearts from Pakistan against Muslims and the danger they betokened to the security of India.

The A. I. C. C. condemned(1) the inhuman acts by whatever community perpetrated in both parts of India. It made it clear both for the people and the Government that even though the Congress agreed to a division of the country it never accepted the theory that there were two or more nations in India. 'It has firmly believed' it declared, 'in the whole of India as a nation, bound together by indissoluble cultural and historical links which had been further strengthened in the course of the national struggle for freedom...........India is a land of many religions and many races and it must remain so. India has been and is a country with a fundamental unity and the aim of the Congress has been to develop this great country as a whole as a democratic secular state where all citizens enjoy full rights and are equally entitled to the protection of the State, irrespective of the religion to which they belong.'

'The Congress' it further declared, 'wants to assure the minorities in India that it will continue to protect to

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(1)Ref: Resolution A.I.C.C. Delhi, 15-17 Nov. 47—Bullitin No. 6,1947 page 2

the best of its ability, their citizen rights against aggression. The Central Government as well as the provincial Governments must accordingly make every effort to create conditions wherein all minorities and all citizens have security and opportunity for progress.'

These were no pious declarations and affirmations of the old and traditional Congress policy and creed. It was a policy which the temporary madness in which the country was gripped had made unacceptable to great majority of the people. Some Congressmen were diverted into wrong channels by passion and prejudice but the majority of Congressmen and the Congress organisation as a whole stood loyally by the great traditions of the Congress.

PROBLEM OF RELIEF & REHABILITATION

Tragic happenings in the country had resulted in large scale migrations of Muslims from India to Pakistan and of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan to India, tremendous suffering to millions of people and a great upsetting of the nation's economy. These migrations gave rise to baffling problems of relief and rehabilitation. Gandhiji has been giving deep and anxious thought to these problems. He placed his views before the Working Committee. His remedies were of a radical nature. He was of the opinion that the only right and effective solution of the problem of the refugees was that all evacuees and refugees from either Dominion should ultimately return to their homes and their original occupation. Those who had not migrated should be encouraged to stay. The two Dominions should negotiate on this basis and reverse the process of migration. That was, according to Gandhiji, the only correct and lasting solution of the problem. Difficulties, psychological and other, in the way of this solution were formidable but they did not daunt Gandhiji. It was monstrous that mil-

lions of innocent men, women and children should be obliged to leave their all and migrate to another country. India must exert her moral strength to end this monstrosity.

ASSURANCE TO THE MINORITY AND THE REFUGEES

After much discussion the Working Committee accepted Gandhiji's view and embodied it in the resolution(1) it passed for the A. I. C. C. The Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. also made it clear in their resolution that 'the policy to be followed by the Indian Union is to protect the minorities still residing there and to prevent their removal by force or by creating circumstances which compel their evacuation'. They also made it clear that 'the refugees in the Indian Union are entitled to every care and attention from the authorities and the people within the union as long as they have to remain there'.

To give effect to this policy the resolution(2) laid down that 'no house not vacated willingly by a Muslim shall be used for the accommodation of the refugees, except by proper legal authority.' Also 'movements of refugees, which are already taking place by train, convoy or otherwise, should be regulated in accordance with the policy laid down above and no one should be sent away unless he expresses his desire to migrate'.

This resolution was a further convincing proof of the fully nationalist and non-communal character of the Congress and the Governments controlled by them. The policy laid down for migrations was not an obviously practical proposition but it was right and proper that the country should

(1) Ref. Risolution Delhi Nov. 15-17, 1947—Bulletin No. 6, 1947 page 16
(2) Ref. " " " " " " " " 17

work towards it and undo to the extent possible a flagrant wrong done to millions of people.

The A.I.C.C. in its other resolution(1), disapproved of all communal organisations, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, which sought to promote their respective interests on so-called religious considerations in conflict with the national interest. It further disapproved of private armies which these communal organisations were seeking to build up. Such armies were a menace to the hardwon freedom of India and should consequently be suppressed by the Central and Provincial Governments. The latter were asked by the A.I.C.C. to take necessary steps in this behalf.

HAPPENINGS IN STATES CONDEMNED.

The A.I.C.C. also took note of what was happening in States(2), the unpatriotic conduct of some princes and the advantage that was sought to be taken on the lapse of British paramountcy. They made it clear that 'whatever may be the legal implications of accession and lapse of British Paramountcy, the moral result of the independence of India was undoubtedly the establishment and recognisation of the power of the people as distinguished from that of the princes and feudal and other interests hostile to natural popular aspirations. This power the Congress is determined to uphold at any cost.'

The A.I.C.C. unequivocally condemned the attempt made in some States to liquidate the minority population.

CONTROL SYSTEM CRITICISED.

The A.I.C.C. also took note of the situation that was created by the government 'controls' on food stuffs and clothing(3). The 'controls' had led to much corruption and hoarding and a large growing blackmarket where controlled commodities were made available at fantastic prices. The

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(1) Ref. Risolution Delhi Dec. 31, 1947—Bulletion No. 6, 1947 page 18
(2) Ref. „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ 19
(3) Ref. „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ 19

government controlled machinery was both inefficient and corrupt and the public experienced much acute inconvenience at its hands. These controls dated from the war. The scarcity of essential commodities made controls necessary but the good the controls did seemed to be more than nullified by the evils to which they led, the widespread demoralisation in government services as well as in the public. Gandhiji raised his powerful voice against these controls. He voiced the popular feeling. The Working Committee also considered at its meetings the situation created by the controls, and the majority of members expressed themselves against continuance of 'controls'. It was however pointed out to them that the Governments, both Central and Provincial, had considered the situation and they felt that the lifting of 'controls' might result in widespread misery and starvation. Gandhiji's active and open opposition to 'controls' obliged the Government to reconsider the situation. The question also came up before the A.I.C.C. The A.I.C.C. expressed alarm at the disturbance of normal life by the various controls. They 'interfered with the process of self-reliance and arrested the 'incentive to production, especially in the matter of growing more food-stuffs, and the manufacture of hand-spun and hand—woven khadi'. They expressed the opinion that the Central and Provincial Governments should give urgent consideration to the problem of decontrol conistently with the public good.

PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION.

It was an important A.I.C.C. meeting, and its importance was greatly enhanced by the fact that the Congress President Acharya Kripalani tendered in his opening address at the A.I.C.C. his resignation of the office of the President. The resignation came as a surprise to the A.I.C.C. members. The circumstances which caused the resignation were hidden from them. Acharya Kripalani in his opening speech gave a

review of the situation obtaining in the country and many elements in it which caused anxiety and perturbation in the public mind. Pakistan, with its exclusive communal creed, its cult of hatred and terrorism, was a menace to India and Asia. It was necessary, the Congress President said, that India took a firm stand and prepared against this menace. India should be made strong. The President then dealt with the problem of minorities in Pakistan. 'They were', said he, 'part of our nation as much as we are.........It is not they but we who voted for the acceptance of the June 3rd plan which has deprived them of the fruits of freedom and placed them at the mercy of a party in whose ideals they did not believe'. They were now being treated as worse than Pariahs in Pakistan. India had to give them shelter when they came fleeing from terror. He pleaded for intellgent planning and proper co-ordination in order that the evacuated men and women might be absorbed in their economy. Dealing with problems facing the Congress organisation, he said, that the Congress being a national and not an international organisation it was inconsistent for them to maintain Congress parties in Pakistan. But in India the Congress, even though her political objective was achieved, should continue to function as a well-knit disciplined political party and work for the social and economic reconstruction of the country. There was no other political party in existence which could fill the gap, were the Congress to disappear from the scene. The Congress President deplored 'the decay in the calibre and morale of our political workers'. Factions and divisions based on personal rivalry were increasingly taking the place of the unity that held Cogressmen together in the days of struggle and suffering.

After dealing with the various questions that were agitating the Congress and the country, the Congress President briefly indicated the circumstances which obliged him to

resign from the office of the President. He said that ever since his election as President of the Congress, the question that perturbed his mind had been 'what should be the relation of the Congress Executive or the Working Committee to the Government at the Centre'. This is a matter which is bound to affect for good or ill not only the character of the Central Government in the new set-up but also the position of the Congress in the country. The indefiniteness of the relation has already caused confusion in the minds of Congressmen and the general public who do not know and cannot yet understand where the responsibility for any particular decision or the want of it lies.

'How is the Congress' the President further explained, 'to give to the Government its active and enlightened cooperation unless its highest executive or its popularly chosen head is taken into full confidence, on important matters that affect the nation.' The Congress cannot 'serve as a living and effective link between the government and the people unless the leadership in the government and in the Congress work in the closest harmony. Any action which weakens the organisation of the party or lowers its prestige in the eyes of the people must sooner or later undermine the position of the Government.' The President therefore felt that if the present confusion was not checked in time 'the Congress as an organisation will speedily disintegrate and its place in the national life will be captured by some other organisation, may be militant communalism or by the Communist party'. Acharya Kripalani said that he discussed this problem both with Gandhiji and his colleagues in the Working Committee. The need for this cooperation was recognised in theory but he found it missing in practice. 'It may be' he said, 'due to the fact that all of us are not united on basic policies or it may be that this coopera tion is lacking because I who happen to be President of the organisation do not enjoy the confidence of my colleagues in

the Central Government. If that is so then I should be the last person to stand in the way of what is necessary in the interests of this nation,' and hence his resignation.

The A.I.C.C. would have liked to discuss the resignation of the President before accepting it or rejecting it. But the President made his decision to resign irrevocable. He further advised the A I.C.C. that there should be no discussion on his resignation. Gandhiji in his opening speech tendered similar advice to the A.I.C.C. The A.I.C.C. therefore had no option but regretfully to accept the resignation of Acharya Kripalani. They elected unanimously Dr. Rajendra Prasad to be the President of the Congress.

GANDHIJI'S FAST

The Central Government, the Congress and above all Gandhiji, all bent their energies to the single all-important task of restoring communal harmony in India. What happened in Pakistan, Gandhiji reiterated endlessly at his prayer meetings, should not guide and control the conduct of the people of India. What was evil did not turn into good because the former was being perpetrated across the Indian border in Pakistan. That way lay the ruin of both the countries, all culture of both Hinduism and Islam. Gandhiji placed before his countrymen an absolute, unalterable standard of private and public conduct and he countenanced no deviation from it, however great the provocation. Gandhiji's prayer meeting addresses had a calming effect on the communal situation, but the passions of the people were yet unconquered. Fresh tragedies continued to be enacted. Gandhiji could not be a passive spectator of these tragedies and especially when they happened in the very capital of India. The ruin of Delhi would be, according to him, the ruin of India and Pakistan. Gandhiji was anxious to spend a good bit of time in Noakhali but when Delhi became a trouble spot he resolved to stay in Delhi and apply his 'Do or

Die' remedy to the capital of India. His long presence in Delhi was a potent factor of peace in the city after a spell of communal frenzy. But it was unstable and artificial peace. Incidents occurred almost daily. The refugees were full of anger and hatred which by rapid degrees infected the indigenous population. Cases of murder and loot were not infrequent. Muslims lived in constant fear. This was not a situation which Gandhiji could tolerate. When everything else fails Gandhiji resorts to his final sanction—fasting. His deep agony at the continuing insanity of his people now found expression in his decision to embark on an indefinite fast which would terminate only if peace returned to Dehli.

The fast which started on Jan. 13, 1948 stirred India and caused concern throughout the world. The world had little difficulty in perceiving the nobility of the purpose for which the fast was undertaken. Delhi was galvanised into activity. Leading men belonging to all communities as well as the mass of the people of Delhi quickly responded to Gandhiji's fast. Anger and passion died away in many a breast giving way to a supreme concern for Gandhiji's life and the cause for which it was staked. Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, men, women, students, teachers, Congressmen and non-Congressmen, officials and non-officials all combined in a supreme effort to end the communal strife and establish genuine peace in Delhi. The energetic efforts of the people of Delhi greatly improved the situation but Gandhiji was not to be easily satisfied. Gandhiji in his talk with Maulana Azad laid down the following conditions for breaking the fast: (1) Complete freedom of worship to Muslims at the tomb of Khwaja Qutbuddin and non-interference with the celebration of the annual fair which was due to be held there in a week. (2) Voluntary evacuation by non-Muslims of all the Mosques in the city which are being used for residential purposes or which have been converted into temples. (3) Free movement of Muslims in areas where they used to stay before the disturbances. (4) Full safety to Muslims

while travelling by train. (5) No economic boycott of Muslims. (6) Full discretion to Muslims to invite non-Muslims to live in areas occupied by them and (7) Freedom to Muslim evacuees to come back to Delhi if they so desired.

The Congress President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, convened a representative gathering of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim leaders to consider the steps necessary for restoring communal harmony in the city and conveying necessary assurances to Gandhiji. Rajendra Babu brought over to Gandhiji 100 people representing Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, representatives of Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayam Seva Sangh and representatives of refugees from the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. He read to Gandhiji a document signed by these representatives pledging them to work untiringly for peace. Gandhiji was requested to end his fast and thereby end the agony of millions of people in India, Pakistan and elsewhere. Telegrams were pouring in from Pakistan and India urging him to give up fast. Gandhiji accepted the pledge and assurances of the representatives of Delhi and broke his fast on 18th January, 1948, six days after its commencement.

CENTRAL PEACE COMMITTEE

A Central Peace Committee was set up for establishing permanent harmony and goodwill between different communities under the Chairmanship of the Congress President.

GANDHIJI'S ASSASSINATION

Gandhiji's precious life was saved. But who knew that even before Gandhiji recovered from the after-effects of the fast, an assassin's bullet would remove him from our midst and the whole world would be poored and bereft of the only light that shone in the vast gloom that was our world.

On January 30 occurred an event which profoundly grieved and shocked the whole world. Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by one Nathuram Vinayak Godse, shortly

after five on Friday, 30th January 1948 as Gandhiji was walking to the prayer ground at the Birla House. The news of the tragedy came with a sense of personal loss to every sensitive soul in the world. The loss to India was incalculable.

The whole country, all its races and communities felt the loss and the deep void and not the least the Muslim Community whose greatest benefactor he proved to be in her darkest and most tragic hour in recent history.

EMERGENT MEETING OF THE W.C.

An emergent meeting[1] of the Working Committee was held at New Delhi on 5th and 6th February to consider the situation consequent on Mahatma Gandhi's tragic assassination. No other body of persons in India could perhaps have felt the loss as keenly as the Working Committee whose unfailing guide and counsellor he has been for over quarter of a century and whose decisions and policies he shaped and through them the destiny of India.

The Working Committee placed on record its profound sense of sorrow and shame at the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi[2]. The foul deed was indicative of, the Working Committeee pointed out, 'the communal poison which has been sedulously propagated for years in this country......... It was against the spread of this poison and to establish peace and harmony that Gandhiji pitched the whole might of his great personality'. The Working Committee called upon all Congressmen and organisations to initiate and carry on an intensive drive against communalism by removing causes of friction by ensuring to all minorities

(1) Ref. Page 5 Bulletin 7, 1947.

(2) Ref. Resolution Delhi Feb. 5 & 6, 1948, Page 7 Bulletin 7, 1947.

equal rights of citizenship and by organising fraternisation among members of all communities'. The Working Committee further asked the Government 'to take note of forces of hatred and violence acting in the open or in the dark to disrupt the roots of social life and take action to counteract them'.

GANDHI NATIONAL MEMORIAL FUND

The Working Committee in a separate resolution[1] decided that a National Memorial Fund be started with the object of carrying out the constructive programme to which Gandhiji had attached the greatest importance and which was the most effective way in which the nation could honour his memory. The fittest memorial to Gandhiji was of course his own imperishable teachings and achievements which were enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen. The Committee appealed to the people of India to contribute to this National Memorial Fund and suggested that each individual should give at least ten days' income to it. The method of utilising this fund was left to be decided by a representative meeting of those interested in it. They would choose trustees and a managing committee. The Congress President was authorised to take preliminary steps in connection with the Fund, including the appointment of a provisional Committee and a provisional Secretary for launching the Fund.

The A.I.C.C. at its meeting in February[2] approved of the action of the Working Committee in starting a Gandhi National Memorial Fund with the object of furthering the constructive, educational, social and cultural ideals and activities with which Mahatma Gandhi was so intimately associated during his life-time.

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi Feb. 5 & 6, 1948, Page 8 Bulletin 7, 1947.
(2) „ „ „ Feb. 21 & 22 1948, Page 13, „ „ 1947

The Congress President appointed the following provisional Committee for launching the Fund:

Dr. Rajendra Prasad ... President
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Shri C. Rajagopalachariar
Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
Shri Jairamdas Daulatram
Shri Jagjivan Ram
Acharya J. B. Kripalani
and Shri J. C. Kumarappa } ... Secretaries

THE NEW CONGRESS CONSTITUTION

The question of revising the constitution of the Congress has been before the Working Committee and Congressmen in general ever since the first A. I. C. C. meeting, in September 1945 at Bombay, after the release of Working Committee members and others in July of that year. No Congress Session had been held for five years since Ramgarh. Many events happened since then which required that the question of the Congress Constitution be considered fully and necessary changes made so as to make the Congress a fitter instrument for achieving its goal. The A.I.C.C. at Bombay appointed a Constitution Committee for the purpose. The Committee met as often as was found necessary. It produced a draft. The Working Committee however did not have an opportunity of carefully studying the draft and making its detailed recommendations to the A.I.C.C. and the Congress Session. The Congress Session at Meerut therefore could not adopt any new

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi Feb. 21 & 22 1948, Page 13, Bulletin No. 7, 1948
(1) Ref. Resolution Meerut 22nd Nov. 1946, Page 8 Bulletin No. 1, 1947.

constitution. Instead, it passed a resolution[1] that in view of the great developments and the new conditions that had arisen, the Congress authorised the All India Congress Committee to amend and revise the Congress Constitution.

The A. I. C. C. enlarged the old Constitution Committee which now consisted of (1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad, (2) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, (3) Acharya Narendra Deo, (4) Shri R. R. Diwakar, (5) Shri Jai Prakash Narain, (6) Shri Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, (7) Shri Purshottam Das Tandon, (8) Shri Mridula Sarabhai, (9) Dr. B. V. Keskar, (10) Shri Srinivas Mallaya, (11) Shri S. K. Patil, (12) Shri Jairamdas Doulatram, (13) Shri Shankarrao Deo, and (14) Acharya Jugal Kishore.

The Constitution Committee met more than once and produced a draft. It was expected that it would be considered by the A. I. C. C. which met in June 1947 in Delhi. The Congress was in the midst of important negotiations with the British Government, and India was on the eve of independence. What shape exactly the Congress should take in a free India, it was thought, should better be decided when these negotiations were over and conditions were free from uncertainty and instability, which prevailed then. Gandhiji too was of opinion that under the disturbed conditions in the country it was not wise to try the experiment of putting into operation an altogether new constitution. He advised that some emergent measures might be adopted for the interim period.

India attained Freedom on August 15. The object for which the Congress had struggled and suffered was now achieved but it had to continue to function for the service of the country. It had to run the administration of the country at the Centre and in the provinces. It alone represented the people and enjoyed their confidence. It had to continue to function for another reason. It was true that the object of the Congress as laid down in the Constitution was the attainment of freedom

[1]Ref. Resolution Meerut 22 Nov. 46, Page 8, Bulletin No. 1, 1947.

by peaceful and legitimate means. But the history of the Congress, its resolutions, the pronouncements and activities of its leaders and principal spokesmen, notably Gandhiji's, all pointed to a wider and deeper objective and that was the political, social and economic emancipation of India and its people, especially the poor and the disinherited. The Congress had therefore to function in a Free India on a wider plane and for a wider objective.

The A. I. C. C. met in November at Delhi to consider the situation which the partition and its bitter aftermath had created in the country. The question of the future Congress Constitution also came up before it; but it could not be taken up partly because other important matters were before the A.I.C.C. and partly because the changed situation necessitated further thought on the subject. The A.I.C.C. passed a resolution[1] appointing another committee for revising the present constitution, including the objective and to submit the draft of the revised constitution to a special session of the All India Congress Committee specially convened for the purpose, not later than the end of January 1948 and 'pending the final approval of such a constitution by the A.I.C C. to postpone all Congress elections under the present constitution'.

The Committee consisted of the following members: (1) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, (2) Shri Purshottam Das Tandon, (3) Acharya Narendra Dev, (4) Shr R. R. Diwakar, (5) Shri S. K. Patil, (6) Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh and (7) Acharya Jugal Kishore (Convener).

Acharya Jugal Kishore through the press and circular to Congress Committees indicated the main points which required consideration in connection with the constitution and sought thereon the opinion of Congressmen and Congress Committees. A large number of suggestions were received. The Constitu-

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi 17th Nov. 1947 Page 20, Bulletin No. 6, 1947.

tion Committee gave them careful consideration. The points on which suggestions were invited were (1) the New Congress Objective, (2) Continuance or discontinuance of four-anna membership, (3) Jurisdiction of the Congress; whether it should be confined to India or extend to the provinces in Pakistan, (4) Whether or not the Congress should function in States, (5) Qualifications for members of elective committees, and (6) Whether Congress elections should be annual or triennial.

The Constitution Committee appointed by the A.I.C.C. met several times both formally and informally. It sat finally in Bombay and finalised the draft for submission to the A.I.C.C. Barring Acharya Narendra Deo all members were present. Shri Jai Prakash Narain was present at some of the sittings of the Committee by special invitation.

The Constitution Committee placed the draft before the Working Committee[1] at its meeting in January 1948 at New Delhi. Gandhiji was present at this meeting. The Committee considered the draft and heard Gandhiji's opinion on it. Gandhiji did not feel that the suggested changes would meet the requirements of the new situation. The Working Committee suggested that the Constitution Committee should meet Gandhiji and discuss their proposals with him and submit a revised draft to the Working Committee. The Constitution Committee met Gandhiji on the 27th January and had about an hour's discussion with him. Gandhiji explained his proposals and fundamental approach to the problem. The Constitution Committee requested him to reduce his proposals to writing so that the Constitution Committee might have before them a clear and definite picture of his proposals. Gandhiji agreed. Acharya Jugal Kishore got Gandhiji's draft on the afternoon of January 30. A few hours later an assassin's bullet removed Gandhiji from our midst. The redical proposals

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(1) Ref. Res. Delhi Jan. 24—26, 1948, Page 4, Bulletin No. 7, 1947,

contained in the draft needed clarification but now we found ourselves obliged to depend entirely on our own resources.

The Working Committee considered the draft of the Constitution Committee as well as that of Bapu. It accepted as many suggestions of Bapu as it could conveniently do. But Gandhiji's basic approach was not found acceptable. Gandhiji suggested in his draft that India having attained political independence, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e., as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine had outlived its use. But India had still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The Congress should be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies. 'For these and other similar reasons', wrote Gandhiji, 'the A. I. C. C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organisation and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh.'

A. I. C. C. OUTLINES OBJECT OF THE CONGRESS.

The Working Committee after considering both the drafts recommended to the A. I. C. C. certain fundamental principles as the basis for the new Constitution. The A. I. C. C. which met in Feb, 48 accepted the recommendations of the Working Committee. The new object which the A. I. C. C. accepted was as follows (1):

'The object of the Indian National Congress is the well-being and advancement of the the people of India and the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth in India based on equality of opportunity and of political, economic and social rights and aiming at world peace and fellowship.'

Every adult of the age of 21 years and over was entitled to vote in the election of a primary Congress panchayat. There shall be a

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi, Jan. 21 & 22, 1948 Page 15, Bulletin No. 7, 1948.

primary panchayat in every village or group of villages. A candidate for election to a primary panchayat was required to be a habitual wearer of Khadi and a teetotaller and satisfy a few other conditions. The annual fee for a member of a primary panchayat was fixed at Re. 1. Members of primary Panchayats would elect delegates of the Congress in the proportion of one for every lakh of population. Members of Committees other than primary committees would be effective members who would be required to be active participants in the Constructive Programme and would belong to no other political party with a separate constitution, membership and programme. The term of every Congress committee was to be three years. The Congress shall function in the States in the same manner as in the provinces.

The Constitution Committee prepared another draft based on the principles accepted by the A. I. C. C. This draft was placed before the Working Committee at its April 1948 meeting in Delhi (1). The Committee considered the draft and generally adopted it but recommended a number of changes in it. The Constitution Committee agreed to most of the changes recommended by the Working Committee. The final draft that was placed before the A. I. C. C. was the draft agreed to both by the Working Committee and the Constitution Committee.

BOMBAY SITTING OF A. I. C. C.
ACCEPTANCE OF CONGRESS CONSTITUTION

A meeting of the A. I. C. C. was held in Bombay on April 24, and 26, 1948 under the presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The A. I. C. C. considered the Constitution draft placed before it by the Working Committee, article by article (2). The discussion on the Constitution lasted for two days. Several amendments were moved to some articles of the Con-

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi, April 21 & 22, 1948. Page 1, Bulletin 1, 1948
(2) Ref. Resolution Bombay, April, 24—26, 1948, Page 12 „ „

stitution. A great many of these amendments were rejected by the House and those that were accepted by the mover of the resolution and the Working Committee were passed by the A. I. C. C.

INTERIM MEASURES FOR CONGRESS ORGANISATION IN STATES & PROVINCES

The Constitution that was passed by the A. I. C. C. could not be immediately put into operation. It was therefore decided to pass some interim measures both in regard to the States and the provinces. The A. I. C. C. adopted some interim proposals whereby a new A. I. C. C. and the office bearers, provincial and subordinate Congress committees, could be re-elected. The proposals also provided for the functioning of the Congress Organisation in the States. The Working Committee which met towards the end of April in Delhi issued detailed instructions in regard to interim elections in provinces and the States (1). For the purpose of these interim elections the first step the P. C. C.'s had to take was to get the delegates and members of D. C. C.'s and lower committees to sign the form for effective membership. Appropriate directions were also sent to the regional councils.

Provincial Congress Committees met on June 13 and re-elected the A. I. C. C. and their office-bearers. The Congress Organisation which is functioning to-day is in terms of the interim proposals which the A. I. C. C. passed in April and which the Working Committee subsequently clarified.

THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATION

With the formation of Congress popular governments at the Centre and in the Provinces and in view of the prospect of full freedom being attained in the near future a certain amount of looseness entered into the Congress organisation. The old

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi April 30 to May 1, 1948 Page 4 Bulltin No. 1, 1948

vitality and dynamism of the Congress appeared to be gradually on the decline and there was no knowing where the decline would stop. A great majority of our leaders assumed administrative responsibilities. They had little time for attending to either the day to day work of the Congress or shaping its policies apart from the governmental sphere. But the Congress organisation had to continue. It had yet much work to do in the social and economic spheres apart from the strictly political education of the people of India. Acharya Kripalani in his Presidential address at Meerut pointed out the tasks before the Congress and warned Congressmen against dangers and temptations which the new situation offered. He emphasised that the Congress was a volunteer organisatton not buttressed by the might of the State. It had served the people of India through suffering, service and sacrifice. It could only function through the willing loyalty of its members, through unity and discipline — all self-evolved and not imposed by an external dictator.

It was the general feeling among Congressmen that a new Congress Constitution was needed to answer the needs of the changed situation and the novel demands made on the Congress organisation. The Constitution Committee which the A.I.C.C. meeting had appointed in September 1945 had prepared a Constitution, but the Working Committee did not have time to study it carefully and make its own considered recommendations. It was decided to postpone consideration of the Constitution Committee's Report, and the A.I.C.C. was authorised to amend and revise the Congress Constitution in order to make the Congress as widely representative of the Indian people as possible and at the same time a more efficient instrument for giving effect to the national will. The General Secretaries on assuming office addressed themselves to the task of strengthening and vitalising the Congress organisation. In their first

circular[1] to the P.C.C's they outlined the tasks that lay before the Congress. Social revolution was now, they explained, to be their new objective and the constructive programme as laid down by Gandhiji, the means for attaining it. But they observed, 'while in recent years the Congress has gained considerably in strength and popularity, we must admit that organisationally we have become weak and that inner conflicts, narrow considerations of creed and party, have caused divisions in our ranks that have diverted our attention from the straight and narrow path of selfless service. With the acceptance, of office, power politics has contaminated our outlook. The Congress should once again', they declared, 'become the embodiment and organised expression of the will of our masses and their disciplined service'. They directed that there should be a Congress Committee in every village engaged in actively promoting the constructive programme. In another circular[2] the General Secretaries gave a scheme of the Congress reorganisation which they desired the P.C.C's and their subordinate committees to carry out. The work before the Congress divided itself into (1) Organisational, (2) Political, (3) Constructive, and (4) Parliamentary. The main emphasis was laid on the Constructive Programme, each item of which needed close and careful consideration. The General Secretaries directed all P.C.C's to seek the help and cooperation of the All India Constructive Organisations such as the All India Spinners Association, the All India Gram Udyog Sangh, The Harijan Sevak Sangh, and the Talimi Sangh in the implementation of the Constructive Programme. Hitherto cooperation and collaboration between the Congress and these Constructive Sanghs had been lacking. It was necessary now to remedy this lack of cooperation. The Congress would

(1) Circular dated 3rd Jan. 1947. Congress Bulletin No. 2, Feb, 1947

(2) „ „ 11th „ 47, „ „ „ „

benefit from the advice and assistance of these expert bodies and the latter would be vivified by a closer contact with the parent organization. The Secretaries also stressed the need for a good, efficient, broad-based and public spirited volunteer organisation.

THE ALLAHABAD CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES

It was not enough to approach the P.C.C's through circulars, nor could organisational matters be properly discussed through this medium. It was therefore decided to call a Conference of the Presidents and Secretaries of the P.C.C's at Allahabad and place before it all matters connected with the Congress Organisation and the new role it would assume. This Conference met at Allahabad on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th February 1947. To this Conference were invited Secretaries of all-India Constructive Organisations. The Conference was a successful one. There was a frank exchange of views on all matters that came up for consideration. A comprehensive agenda had already been issued to the P.C.C's and their opinions invited before the Conference took place. Many P.C.C's called meetings of their executives and Presidents and Secretaries of the District and City Congress Committees and placed our plan of reorganisation before them. Acharya Kripalani inaugurated the Conference. He said that the many weaknesses and defects in the Congress Organisation were proving a bar to its effective functioning as an instrument of Swaraj for the people. He deprecated the tendency to blame each other for these weaknesses without curing oneself of the weaknesses. The struggle that faced them, he observed, was the struggle against their own weaknesses. Without such a struggle Swaraj for the masses would remain a dream. The Conference passed resolutions on "Mass Contact", "Parties within Congress", "Constructive Programme", "Volunteer Organisation", "Relation between

Congress Committees and Congress Ministries", "Labour", and "Congress reorganisation".

Among causes for weaknesses and confusion in the Congress Organisation, the provincial chiefs pointed out, was the constant ideological conflict going on in all committees and in all fields of activity between the so-called orthodox Congressmen and the Socialists. They complained that while they were not against the existence of different ideologies in the Congress, organised parties with their own policies and programmes and funds and registered membership and giving definite mandates to their members were destructive of all discipline in the Congress and hampered work in all fields. The resolution the Conference passed on the subject affirmed that the existence of organised political parties within the Congress functioning in this manner seriously affected the efficiency and discipline of the Congress Organisation and confused the mind of the masses. The Working Committee was requested to adopt measures to prevent this undesirable state of things and, if no other solution was available, to take steps to prevent the formation and continuance of such parties within the Congress.

RESOLUTION ON CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

About the most important and the least controversial resolution the Conference passed was about the Constructive Programme. It pointed out that the main object of the constructive programme was to stimulate the initiative of the people themselves to organise their political, social and economic life on cooperative lines and through Panchayats with a view to make them self-reliant and self-sufficient. The Conference requested the Working Committee to appoint a small committee called the Central Constructive Programme Committee and charge it with guiding and advising the Congress organisation and the public with regard to important items of the constructive programme.

A comprehensive note on 'Congress Reorganisation' prepared by the Permanent Secretary was accepted by the Conference. The note laid down the lines on which all Congress Committees from the Provincial downward should be reorganised.

Acharya Kripalani, closing the Conference, warned Congressmen against the danger of succumbing to material temptations and of subordinating the larger national interest to the narrow interests of party, caste or clique. He also warned against violence as a method of settling internal quarrels especially in India where our people had yet to learn restraint and build up healthy conventions.

EFFECT OF THE CONFERENCE ON CONGRESS ORGANISATION

The Conference of the provincial chiefs and the work it did had a heartening effect on the Congress Organisation but the effect did not last long. The experiment in 'Constructive Work' which the Conference initiated did not, for a variety of reasons, it must be regretfully confessed, prove a success.

The Working Committee generally approved of the resolution on 'Constructive Programme'* passed by the Allahabad Confenence and appointed a committee to 'guide and advise Congress Committees and the public with regard to khadi, village industries, basic education, Harijan work, literacy and Hindustani Prachar.'

The A.I.C.C. Office followed up these resolutions of the Working Committee by concrete action. (Reference—Report of Constructive Programme Deptt.)

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* Ref. Resolution Delhi March 6-8, 1947 Page 5, Bulletin No. 3. 1947

LABOUR

The question of labour activity engaged the consideration of the Congress Organisation, especially the Working Committee, from time to time. Labour is an important element in the social and economic life of India and on it depended a great deal whether there was peace in the industrial life of the country or strife. Labour attracted many parties and groups, all contending for mastery. The Congress gave its support to the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh which came nearest to its methods and ideals. (Ref—Report of the Labour Dept.)

Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh held a meeting at Delhi under the presidentship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It was inaugurated by Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President. It considered the Labour situation in the country and decided that the interests of Labour would not be served by their continuance in the All India Trade Union Congress which was dominated by Communists and which set little store by the purity of means.

NEED FOR A NEW CONSTITUTION AND PROGRAMME

The Congress President, Acharya Kripalani, had called a meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees at Delhi in July, 1947 to discuss plans for evolving a new Constitution, creed and programme in the context of a free India. The questions that came up for consideration were (1) Whether the Congress should continue to serve the Indian people in free India or it should be dissolved, (2) If it was to continue what was to be its objective and programme, and (3) Was it necessary to make fundamental changes in its structure.

A note on 'The Role of the Congress' was prepared by Shri Shankarrao Deo, which had the general approval of the meeting. This note was placed before the Provincial Congress Committees and the public through the Press and it gave a new reorientation of Congress objectives. The note emphasised the imperative need for continuance of the Congress for regaining the unity of India which was temporarily broken up and more especially, for establishing a democratic social order based on justice and equality. India at the critical period of her history required a party which would ensure both a stable government and an orderly social, political and economic progress. The Congress alone answered these requirements. The Congress should undertake new tasks and responsibilities and continue its great tradition of service of the people of India. There was no other organisation in the country which could command the loyalty and willing allegiance of the people of India as the Congress did.

The note also made clear that democracy, if it was to be a reality and no mere picus form, should be based not only on economic equality but also on decentralised industry. Economic equality based on centralised big industry would tend to be totalitarian and place political and economic power in the hands of the few. A democratic society, it further empasised, should provide work for every able-bodied man, eliminate middlemen between peasant and the State. The rural economy in India must be reorganised and re-oriented so that the standards of living of town-dwellers and villagers were equalised as far as possible.

To accomplish the new task the Congress should cease to be a platform for various groups and parties with conflicting ideologies and become a well-disciplined political party pledged to the realisation of definite social and economic objectives.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CONGRESS

The A.I.C.C. which met in November 1947 at Delhi passed an important resolution(1) concerning the social and economic objectives of the Congress. There was much confusion in the public mind as to what exactly was the direction in which the Congress and the Congress Governments were moving in their attempt to re-construct the economy of India. The Congress resolutions on the subject which have been passed from time to time ever since Gandhiji entered the Congress emphasised aspects which were associated with his advocacy of decentralised economy and self-sufficient village units. The emphasis was plain and yet the Congress did not definitely and unequivocally commit itself to the ideas and doctrines of Gandhiji in the social and economic spheres of our national life. There was much vagueness in the Congress policies and much legitimate room for doubt and controversy. There has been a growing demand on the part of intelligent Congressmen that the Congress should clarify its economic and social objectives. The advantages of such a clarification were obvious, one of them being that Congress or Congress-controlled governments would more clearly perceive the direction in which they should move in their task of building up a new economy.

The resolution the A.I.C.C. passed did not contain many words but it laid down briefly and compactly the main principles which should control the future political and social economy of India. The resolution laid down that the democracy which the Congress contemplated was a comprehensive one covering poilitical, economic and social spheres. 'Democracy in the modern age', it said, 'necessitated planned central direction as well as decentralisation of political and economic power, in so far as this was compatible with the safety of the State, with efficient

(1) Ref: Resolution November, 15—17, 1947, Page 20, Bulletin No. 6, 1947.

production and the cultural progress of the community as a whole .... The smallest territorial unit should be able to exercise effective control over its corporate life by means of a popularly elected panchayat. In so far as it is possible, national and regional economic self-sufficiency in the essentials of life should be aimed at.' Large scale industries should belong to the community and they should be so organised that workers became not only co-sharers in the profits but were also increasingly associated with the management and administration of the industry. Land and all other means of production, distribution and exchange must belong to and be regulated by the community in its own interest.

ECONOMIC PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

With a view to drawing up the economic programme for the Congress in accordance with these principles the A.I.C.C. appointed the following committee :—

(1) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
(2) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,
(3) Shri Jai Prakash Narain,
(4) Prof. N. G. Ranga,
(5) Shri Gulzarilal Nanda,
(6) Shri J. C. Kumarappa,
(7) Shri Achyut Patwardhan,
(8) Shri Shankarrao Deo,

with powers to co-opt.

This Committee worked pretty hard and produced a report which was placed before the A.I.C.C. at its meeting in February 1948.[1]

Jawaharlalji explained the broad-principles of the economic programme recommended by the Economic Programme Committee and of which he was the Chairman. It was not easy for the

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi Feb. 21—22, 1948 page 18, Bulletin No. 7, 1947.

A.I.C.C. to consider the report in all its details and implications during the brief time it had at its disposal. The matter was too serious and fundamental to be disposed of so quickly. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru therefore made it clear that the A.I.C.C. if it so desired, might generally approve of the report, deferring its detailed consideration for the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. The A.I.C.C. gave its general approval to the report.

The Working Committee at its April meeting in New Delhi further discussed the report. It was found in the course of the discussion that it would not be possible either for the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. to accept the report without going into each recommendation carefully and fitting it in with other recommendations of a divergent, and some of them of an apparently contradictory, nature. It therefore passed a resolution[1] whereby the A.I.C.C. gave its specific approval to the aims and object as laid down in the report but in regard to more detailed suggestions made on the report it appointed a standing Committee 'to consider the implementation of the general programme, more especially in regard to priorities and make recommendations from time to time to the Working Committee'. The A.I.C.C. passed the resolution recommended by the Working Committee. The Standing Committee had the following members on it :

(1) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman)
(2) Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
(3) Shri Shankarrao Deo
(4) Prof N. G. Ranga
(5) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
(6) Shri Jagjiwan Ram
(7) Shri Gulzarilal Nanda
(8) Shri J. C. Kumarappa
(9) Shri Annada Prasad Choudhary

(Ref.—Report—Economic & Pol. Research Dept.)

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(1) Ref: Resolution Delhi April 21 & 22, 1948, Page 3 Bulletin No. 1, 1948

CONGRESS ORGANISATION IN STATES

The months between April and October were mostly taken up by organisational matters, especially with regard to States. The new Congress Constitution was now ready. The Congress and the country had before them the economic programme which the Congress and the Congress Governments had to implement. The States which hitherto were outside the jurisdiction now became an integral part of the Congress organisation. The lines on which the Congress organisation should function in States were clearly laid down by the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C.

The Congress President and the A.I.C.C. Office gave careful thought to the difficulties that were constantly cropping up in connection with the setting up of the Congress Organisation in States. They had in this connection the benefit of the advice of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, President-elect, who has been closely associated with the States for a number of years. The A.I.C.C. Office prepared a comprehensive note on 'Congress Organisation in States,(1).'

The Working Committee also passed a resolution[2] whereby it was decided that Parliamentary activities in States which had acceded to the Union and in which Congress Committees were functioning would be subject to the same control as similar activities in the existing provinces of the Indian Union.

LAPSES OF CONGRESSMEN & GOVT. OFFICERS

The Congress President and the General Secretaries gave much thought to complaints received from almost all provinces about lapses both on the part of Congressmen and Government officers. There were also complaints that there was undue

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi July 1 & 2, 1948, Page 2 Bulletin No. 2, 1948.
(2) Ref Resolution " " Page 3 , " "

interference by Congressmen in the work of Government officers, which gave rise to difficult local situations, crippled the initiative and weakened the sense of responsibility of Government Officers, and not unoften damaged the prestige of Congressmen themselves. The Congress President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, wrote both to the Provincial Premiers and the P. C. C's. drawing their attention to this unsatisfactory state of affairs and asking them to take necessary steps to end it. He asked the Premiers to evolve a procedure whereby complaints against local officers can be, apart from legal and formal action, effectively looked into. He suggested that some liaison should be established between the Provincial Governments and the P. C. C's. 'which could help smoothen matters and remove the legitimate complaints of the public'. This system could also be extended to districts. The President asked the P. C. C's. to instruct Congressmen not to interfere in the day-to-day administration of local officials. All complaints should be brought to the notice of the Provincial Governments through the provincial and district heads.

The Congress President was keenly alive to the weaknesses that had of late crept into the Congress Organisation and the grave damage they did to its prestige. In his speeches and circulars he drew the attention of the P. C. C's and Congressmen to these weaknesses and the grave danger they betokened to the future of the Congress Organisation if they were not remedied betimes. (Ref.— Report—Central Parliamentry Board)

TOUR OF THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT AND SECRETARIES.

It is customary for the Congress President to tour the provinces and thereby infuse fresh life into the Congress Organisation and contact the people and have first-hand knowledge of their problems and difficulties. Acharya Kripalani during his term of Presidentship toured Tamil Nad, Andhra, Kerala, Mysore, Bengal, U. P., Bihar, Punjab and Bombay.

He received purses amounting to Rs. 185,000 from the South, Jaipur and Bihar. The President also paid a week's visit to Kashmir in May 1947 in connection with the struggle going on in that State for establishing popular responsible government. He explored during his stay in Kashmir means of bringing about an honourable political settlement between the National Conference, whose chief Sheikh Mohammed Abdulla was in prison, and the Kashmir Government. The Congress President failed to make the Kashmir authorities see the error of their ways and release Sheikh Abdulla who alone could deliver the goods on behalf of the people of the State and settle the grave problems which were facing the State. Dr. Rajendra Prasad who assumed the presidentship of the Congress in November 1947 could not, on account of ill-health, tour extensively. Shri Shankarrao Deo toured a good bit of India, including many States, and contacted Congress workers as well as the public. The provinces and States he toured are the Punjab, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nad Malabar, Travancore, Cochin, Nagpur, Vidarbha and Maharashtra. Acharya Jugal Kishore also visited some States and provinces. Shri Sadiq Ali, the Permanent Secretary of the A.I.C.C., also toured the provinces specially in the South to obtain fuller knowledge of the state of the Congress organisation and explain to Congress workers the programme of work which the Congress organisation in a free India should carry out.

NATIONAL WEEK.

The country has been observing the National Week from 6th to 13th April every year for nearly thirty years now. It was in this week that the country launched out on its non-violent struggle for freedom. It has been customary for the Congress to observe the week for a double purpose: (1) to achieve internal strength and (2) to increase mass consciousness through greater concentration on constructive work. In the context of the colossal loss the country

suffered only a few weeks before, the President asked Congressmen and others to concentrate on a countrywide drive for communal harmony and collections for the Gandhi National Memorial Fund. The week was observed throughout the country with enthusiasm.

India completed its first year of independence on August 15, 1948. It was a day of joy and pride but the reflection that Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation, was no more amongst them sobered and chilled the nation. India was passing through hard times and had a multitude of problems to tackle. The measure of enthusiasm displayed on August 15, 1947 was not in evidence on this day in 1948 but the day was observed with due solemnity by the Congress and other organisations, the public and the Government. The Congress President in his statement observed: 'The Day should be used as a day of remembrance and as a day of further resolve and dedication to the service of the country and maintenance, preservation and protection and furtherance of the freedom which we have won'. Striking a balance-sheet of achievements and failures of the first year of Swaraj, the President observed, 'we have just reason to be satisfied that we have not been overwhelmed and have managed to ride the storm. On the other hand we have also to realise that we have not been able to tackle in any measurable manner the great problems of removing poverty and hunger and disease and also some of the problems which have arisen in the wake of the attainment of freedom.........If our freedom has to be lasting and worth while it requires more devoted service and more sacrifice, more intelligent application and more planned work than the struggle for freedem which it was the privilege of the Congress to carry on to a successful issue.'

The country observed October 2, the birthday anniversary of Gandhiji, with due solemnity. The Working Committee in their resolution[1] on Gandhi Jayanti observed that Bapu's

(1) Ref. Resolution Delhi Sept.. 5-8, 1948 page 4 Bulletin No. 3, 1948

absence from their midst 'enjoined upon them a duty to devote themselves in larger measure to the fulfilment of the ideals for which he stood and for whose realization he laid down his life.' They were asked to concentrate upon colleclion for Gandhi Memorial Fund which the Congrses had inaugurated 'for the purpose of carrying out the constructive activities which he did so much during his life-time to implement for the realisation of his ideal of a non-violent society'.

The Congress President issued an earnest appeal for speeding up the collection which hitherto had been very slow on account of the indifference of Congressmen and Congress Committees. Unless Congressmen bestirred themselves, approached the people and undertook door to door collections the response to the noble cause would be meagre. People were ready to contribute their mite but unfortunately-Congress workers did not approach them. Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated all over the country. All classes of people participated in these celebrations. Congressmen were stirred into action and they did some collection work for the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi.

Collections have been unsatisfactory in all States and provinces. The Congress President had suggested that every province and State should aim at a target of Re. 1 per head of the population. The cause was one which readily appealed to the reason and heart of the people and the amount aimed at would have been collected had our workers approached all prospective donors. The Congress organisation did not however function effectively for this piece of constructive work.

CENTRAL AND PUNJAB RELIEF COMMITTEES

The suffering of the refugees was incalculable. It required immense resources to rehabilitate the refugees in India. It was a task which the Governments alone could tackle. But the Congress could not be unalive to its duty in this tragic situation.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Treasurer of the Congress, issued an appeal for relief to the Punjab sufferers, in response to which a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs was received. The Working Committee appointed the following sub-committee to administor the Punjab Relief Fund :—

(1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad. (2) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

(3) Srimati Sucheta Kripalani. (4) General Secretaries.

The Central Relief Committee was formed for administering relief to refugees. Smt. Sucheta Kripalani organised relief on behalf of the Committee. The refugee work done on behalf of this non-official agency won commendation from many quarters. It distributed clothes, gave work to thousands of destitute men and women, organised small scale industries among them, built houses which later the Government purchased. A great deal of the work the Central Relief Committee did was organised by patriotic and public-spirited workers and hence involved appreciably less expenditure than it would have otherwise done.

The interim Congress elections were over. In the normal course the Congress session should have been held towards the end of 1947 but conditions in India were far from normal. There were large scale communal disorders in the country and our leaders were fully absorbed in the task of maintaining peace in India and preserving our hard-won freedom.

CONGRESS SESSION.

The question of holding the annual Congress session came up before the Working Committee at its July meeting after the interim Committee elections were over. The Working Committee considered the letters of invitation for holding the Congress session, received from Tamil Nad, Andhra, Kerala,

Ajmere, Madhya Bharat, Bombay and Rajputana and decided that the Congress should be held at Jaipur in Rajputana by the middle of December 1948.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CONTEST

The Working Committee at its September meeting prescribed for the P.C.C's a time-table for the election of the President of the Congress at the ensuing Session. 4th October 1948 was the last date of nomination, 15th October the last date of withdrawal by proposed candidates and 24th October the date of election of the Congress President by delegates. The following six names were proposed for presidentship:

(1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
(2) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
(3) Acharya J. B. Kripalani
(4) Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh
(5) Shri Purshottam Das Tandon
(6) Shri Shankarrao Deo

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Kripalani, Shri Shankarrao Deo and Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh withdrew their candidatures leaving in the field Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Shri Purshottam Das Tandon. Delegates met in their respective provinces on October 24 and recorded their votes. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya secured 1,199 votes and Shri Purshottam Das Tandon 1,085 votes. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was therefore declared as the duly elected President of the next Congress session.

SECESSION OF THE SOCIALISTS FROM THE CONGRESS

It is a well-known fact that a Socialist group has been functioning within the Congress for over a decade. Its professed object has been to give a radical

reorientation, whatever that phrase might mean at a particular moment and in a particular context, to Congress outlook and Congress policies. It was critical of the Congress when the latter through its principal spokesmen was carrying on negotiation with the British Government, and it practically non-cooperated with the Congress in the negotiation and carried on propaganda against this policy. This resulted in the dissociation of the Party from the Congress and ultimately its leaving the Congress. Its leading members declined to join the Constituent Assembly. Thus though they were in the Congress they did not cooperate in the working out of many of its policies. In the day to day work in districts and provinces there was conflict of approach and view-points between one set of Congressmen who called themselves Socialists and another set who were plain Congressmen. The people were confused when the Congress spoke in two different languages. A conspicuous instance of this confusion and indiscipline was the decision of the Socialist Party in Bombay to set up candidates on its behalf as against Congress candidates in the elections to the Bombay Municipal Corporation. This was clearly destructive of all discipline in the Congress organisation.

The Socialists themselves, especially their principal spokesmen like Shri Jai Prakash Narain, were feeling that it did not do to be in the Congress and yet remain critical of its programme and policies and voice their criticism and opposition openly and repeatedly and create a hostile public opinion. They saw the incongruity of maintaining a distinct political party within the Congress organisation. The Socialist group professed socialism and aimed at converting the Congress to it. There was nothing in the Congress Constitution or Congress policies to debar them from doing so. In fact the programme which the Congress had adumbrated in its election manifesto and later in its resolution on 'social and economic objective' was socialistic in character and intent, and it was adopted with the consent of

the leaders of the Party. The execution of the programme should be the common and united effort of all Congressmen. The execution in the nature of things could not be rapid.

The Socialist Party after a long period of indecision and vacillation at last decided in March 1948 to leave the Congress and function as an independent political party. They called upon all Socialists in the Congress to resign their office in the Congress organisation or legislatures. The resignations were tendered. From the point of view of numbers the resignations did not materially affect the Congress organisation in any province. The Socialist Party soon after these resignations fought the Congress in the District Board elections in the U.P. and set up a large number of its own candidates. They were heavily defeated. They were equally heavily defeated in the bye-elections to the U.P. Assembly which were caused by the resigntion of the members of the Socialist Party in the Provincial Assembly.

OUR GOVERNMENTS

We may not in this report make more than a passing reference to the Congress or Congress-controlled Governments that have been functioning in the country, for over two years in the provinces and since September 2, 1946 at the Centre. At the invitation of the Viceroy, Pandit Nehru assumed the responsibility of forming the Central Cabinet on September 2. There was no formal change in the Government of India Act but the full responsible character of the Central Government was *de facto* recognised by the British Government. The Nehru Cabinet functioned for seven weeks vigorously and made a considerable impression in India and abroad. On October 26, five Muslim League Members joined the Central Government. The circumstances in which they joined the Government and the manner in which they conducted themselves for the time they functioned as ministers

seriously affected the efficiency and the joint responsibility of the Cabinet. It ceased to work as a Cabinet. It functioned in two halves. Discord at the very Centre and heart of the administration was a matter of vital import. We have discussed elsewhere the circumstances and events which finally led to the partition of India. The Central Cabinet was reconstituted with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the Premier. The Muslim League element was entirely excluded from it.

The Central Government had immense, heavy and varied tasks to face. The division of the country and its tragic aftermath brought problems and burdens and crises which would have unnerved many governments, but the Central Indian Government faced them with courage and steadfast adherence to the basic policies of the Congress Large sections of the Indian population in some parts of the country were gripped by communal madness. The secular, nationalist and democratic outlook of the Congress was out of favour with them but the Central Cabniet by a series of firm steps brought the communal situation under control. The Cabinet was powerfully assisted by the moral influence which Gandhiji brought to bear on the situation. The most unfortunate part of these disturbances was the large scale migrations which later developed into wholesale exchange of non-Muslim and Muslim population from West Punjab and the N.W.F P. to East Punjab and elsewhere, and *vice versa*. Evacuation of millions of men and women from one side to the other was a feat of organisation on the part of the Central Government. The Army took a brave and commendable part in these evacuation operations. This wholesale exchange created problems which taxed to the uttermost the resources of the Central Government and, to a smaller extent, the provinces and the states. It had to provide food, shelter and clothing to millions of uprooted and wandering people. The problems are not yet solved They continue to engage the active and conscious consideration of our governments, Central, Provincial and States.

India after partition was not a unified country. There were 500 and odd States in it, which were a source of further disintegration in the country. The Central Government however tackled the problem with an energy, tact and resourcefulness which agreeably surprised the country. The smaller States accepted the advice of the States Ministry to either merge themselves in the adjoining provinces or integrate themselves to form bigger unions The helpless position in which the lapse of paramountcy left the States, especially the smaller ones, the rising tide of popular consciousness, the commendable sense of reality on the part of princes and the tact and resourcefulness of States Ministry of the Central Government, all combined to produce this happy solution of the problem of Indian States. Difficult and delicate problems arose on account of the late accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union and the non-accession of the Hyderabad State. Our Army is still operating in Kashmir. It has many feats of valour to its credit. It has a ruthless and unscrupulous foe to face and conquer. Kashmir has acceded to the Indian Union. But this accession is unpalatable to Pakistan and the latter is endeavouring to conquer Kashmir by force of arms, by false propaganda, by the massacre of innocent men, women and children in Kashmir and Jammu and by letting loose on the State predatory tribesmen. Pakistan is in a state of undeclared or half-declared war with India. India however is exercising restraint. As an example of that restraint she took the Kashmir issue to the U.N.O. The U N.O. however has not yet been able to find any real solution of the problem.

Hyderabad presented a complicated problem. Hyderabad was desirous of proclaiming herself an independent State after the end of British Paramountcy. An overwhelming majority of the people of Hyderabad favoured accession to the Indian Union. And they also desired full responsibile government. Accession and responsible government somehow seemed to go together. The ruler and his supporters set themselves against both accession

and the establishment of responsible government in the State. They aspired to preserve their autocracy inviolate. Accession to the Union would have exposed the State to forces antagonistic to every form of autocratic rule. The State authorities had to contend against a hostile population. They did this by letting loose a reign of terror in the State. A volunteer organisation, called Razakars, sprang up in the State. It had the active support and backing of the State authorities. By rapid degrees this volunteer organisation developed into a grave threat to the peace of the State, and the Indian nation. It was a blatantly communal organisation openly designed to uphold in the name of Islam, the autocratic rule of those already in possession of power and authority.

The Indian Government showed considerable restraint in dealing with Hyderabad. They were anxious to avoid situations in which politico-religious fanatics could again bring about large scale communal disturbances bringing death and desolation to innocent millions. They parleyed and negotiated with the Nizam and his advisers and showed utmost consideration consistently with the welfare of the people of the State. There was no intention however on the part of the Hyderabad authorities to come to any understanding with the Indian Union which would involve any abridgement of their fictitious sovereignty. There were long and protracted negotiations but they came to nothing. What was worse was the daily terror that was being practised by the State. People in thousands fled from the State every day and sought shelter in the Indian territory. The Razakars were a band of brigands and decoits, who created havoc wherever they went and functioned. The overwhelming non-Muslim majority in Hyderabad was at the mercy of a few thousand well-armed civilian fanatics backed by the might of the State. The Indian people were getting restive. They clamoured for action against Hyderabad. The Indian government were fully alive to the needs and delicacies of the situation. They first enforced economic sanctions. The course of events finally obliged them to take strong

police action in the State. Hyderabad surrendered. The Laik Ali Ministry resigned. The Union government are now busy reorganising the administrative machinery in Hyderabad They have left it to the people of Hyderabad to settle their future constitution and the question of accession to the Indian Union. The quick and almost bloodless manner in which the problem of Hyderabad was, in its final and decisive phase, solved spoke greatly for the efficiency of the Indian Army and the wise handling of the situation by the Central Government.

Our leaders in the Central Government were alive to the urgency of solving the manifold problems of internal economy. Prices of food-stuffs and other necessaries of life steadily rose during the period under review giving rise to many problems and much inconvenience and hardship to common man. Rise in prices and scarcity of commodities also led to corruption and black-marketing. Administrative measures to check corruption did not prove very effective. More production and better distribution of food, cloth and other necessaries was the object of the several measures which the Government adopted in several fields of national life. The Government announced an industrial and economic policy which broadly aimed at securing the social and economic objectives which were laid down in the A.I.C.C. report on the economic and social objectives of the Congress.

The Provincial governments during the time they functioned legislated in many fields and carried out many schemes of beneficent nature. They addressed themselves seriously to the problem of abolishing the Zamindari system. The decision to abolish the system has been taken in all the provinces where it prevails but the exact manner in which it should be implemented bristles with difficulties and is under active consideration.

What has been done in the provinces for rural India and in connection with other problems and difficulties of the people is but a small beginning. Our Governments at the Centre and in provinces have inherited from the past a vast accumulation of

problems and burdens and administrative machinery which is far from adequate for our social and economic purposes. There is plenty of discontent in the country and plenty of criticism of the administative machinery but there is a realization of the grave handicaps under which the new popular governments are labouring and the magnitude of the tasks before them.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The Constituent Assembly met on December 9, 1946 It has just completed its two years. During these two years it discussed and debated part by part the Constitution of a free, sovereign India. The Assembly is now at the close of its labours. It is hoped that within a period of months the Constitution would be ready and India would be governed in accordance with this Constitution. The Constitution, when it is finally passed, would give legal and constitutional shape to the dream India has dreamt all these many years. The Constituent Assembly has been fortunate in having for its President our great countryman, Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

The fundamentals of this Constitution were laid down in a resolution which the Constituent Assembly passed at the very start of its labours. We quote here the full text of the resolution :

> "This Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic and to draw up for her future governance a Constitution; wherein the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India shall be a Union of them all; and wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or

with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous Units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom ; or wherein all powers and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people; and wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic, and political, equality of status opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes; and whereby shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilised nations; and this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind."

THE A. I. C. C. OFFICE

The A. I. C. C. Office has been housed since 1930 in the magnificent building of Swaraj Bhawan donated to the nation by Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. Swaraj Bhawan played its own special part in our many struggles for freedom. With the attainment of freedom the Congress found itself confronted with new problems, new tasks and new situations. The A. I. C. C. office

too had had to make necessary adjustments and adaptations. Delhi was the Capital of Free India. It was the centre of many important and vital national activities. The Congress was in power and so to be effective it had to be in living and continuous touch with all the vital currents of national life. Naturally, Delhi was the most appropriate place for securing and maintaining their contact. It was therefore decided by the President and the General Secretaries of the Congress to shift the A. I. C. C. headquarters from Allahabad to Delhi. The Working Committee approved of the decision.

The A. I. C. C. headquarters are now lodged in a building located at Jantar Mantar Road. The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee has offered on behalf of the citizens of Bombay to make a donation of the entire sum amounting to six or seven lakhs of rupees necessary for acquiring a commodious building for the A. I C. C. The Working Committee gratefully accepted the offer of the Bombay citizens made through the President of the Bombay P.C.C.

The A.I.C.C. Office has grown considerably. New tasks before the Congress have necesstiated the opening of new departments in the A.I.C.C. and the strengthening of the old ones. Apart from the main office, the departments functioning in the A.I.C.C. are (1) Economic and Political Research, (2) Foreign, including Indians Overseas, (3) Parliamentary Board, (4) Seva Dal, (5) Constructive Programme, (6) Labour, (7) Students, (8) Publications, (9) Press Cuttings, (10) Complaints & Appeals. Not all the departments are functioning effectively and satisfactority but it is hoped that with the toning up of the Congress Organisation as a whole, the working of these departments too would improve. (Summarised reports of all the departments in the A.I.C C. Office are given below.)

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

The main work of the Foreign Department of the A.I.C.C. has all along been the maintenance of fruitful contacts with personalities, groups and associations in various countries, with a view to making known the ideals and achievements of the Congress and its struggle for India's independence to the outside world. Thus we have been getting sympathy and support to our cause from all over the world. We exchange informative literature with organisations and public men interested in India. The building up of these contacts has not only helped us in our freedom struggle, but has also inevitably focussed our movement against the international background. Many of these contacts were broken during the last war and it was an uphill task to re-establish these friendly relations. The Foreign Department within the last two years has succeeded in renewing them and has also developed new ones.

The achievement of independence has substantially changed this aspect of the work of the department. In the new context as a free country, our publicity work abroad on behalf of the Congress has to be switched on to another key. This has been done and we are now trying our best to supplement the government's efforts to interpret India's problems and difficulties correctly and in general to expose India's achievements in all fields of human activity in their true perspective. The work that the Congress Governments are doing for the amelioration of the masses naturally gets more emphasis in this connection.

PUBLICATION OF BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

It is the intention of the department to bring out informative books and pamphlets with the above object in view and already two books, *viz.*, "Indian Political Parties" giving a picture of the Indian Party System as it is today and

"One Year of Freedom" describing the achievements of the various Congress Governments, have been published. A third book "India and the World" tracing the Congress stand on international questions through its many resolutions on foreign policy etc. is now in hand.

MIDDLE EAST AND INDIANS OVERSEAS DEPTS.

The Middle East Department and the Department of Indians Overseas have recently been amalgamated with the Foreign Department and these three sections now function as an integrated whole. The Department is now paying special attention to the problems of Indians Overseas.

REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

One particular aspect of the work undertaken for Indians abroad deserves special notice. Since the close of the War, the Department has been receiving letters from Indians abroad who are in difficulties and who need help. In the Far East especially there have been several cases of Indians hard hit by the war. The Occupation Powers in those areas, particularly the British, have deprived them of all their belongings and the means of livelihood and in addition in some cases they have also been prosecuted for war crimes. The Department has been prompt in taking action in all such cases by writing to the Government of India representing the facts of the cases and urging remedial action for the wrong done and we are glad to say that several distressing cases have been disposed of favourably and quickly. It is remarkable that Indians everywhere have shown a childlike faith in the ability of the Congress to help them in their misfortune,

The outstanding questions which are at present engaging the attention of the department are the problem of the French and Portuguese Settlements in India, the nationalisation of land in Burmah and its effect on the Indian settlers there and the rights of citizenship for Indians in Ceylon.

MONTHLY JOURNAL "INDIAN AFFAIRS"

It has now been decided to bring out a Monthly Journal to be called "Indian Affairs" on behalf of the Foreign Department mainly devoted to promotion of special and cultural contacts with our countrymen living abroad. The first issue which is now out contains a varied collections of articles of interest to Indians overseas. It is hoped that this Journal would serve as a link between the mother country and Indians spread throughout the world. It would also help the Congress to render better service to these countrymen of ours who have a prior claim on us.

The Foreign Department is also in constant touch with progressive movements and important developments elsewhere, especially through the foreign periodicals received in the A.I.C.C. Library.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

The Economic and Political Research Deparment started work in July 1946. It began with submitting to the Working Committee for a couple of months fortnightly reviews of current economic events and writing appreciative notes on the development activities of the ministries in the News-letter. Simultaneously the nucleus of a Research Department was being built up by collecting reports, statistical abstracts, economic journals and the essential books of reference.

It was decided that the Department should take up the preparation of brochures (on subjects suggested mainly by the Congress Election Manifesto) with a view to—

(a) educate the general public,

(b) show the extent to which the election manifesto is being implemented by the Congress Ministries,

(c) appreciate the work done by such institutions as All India Spinners' Association, All India Village Industries Association, Talimi Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh and Hindusthan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh,

(d) to place facts and materials on which the ministries might frame their legislative policies.

PUBLICATION OF BROCHURES

The Department has brought out the following brochures in the course of the last two years:—

1. Congress Hand Book (1946)
2. Cottage Industry in Indian Economy.
3. Congress and Labour Movement in India
4. Congress Ministries at work (1946-47)
5. Democracy
6. Economic Freedom and Economic Planning
7. Zamindari Abolition and Agrarian Reforms
8. Combating Inflation

PERIODIC TALKS

Since September 1947, the Department also engaged itself in organising periodic talks and lectures on current social, economic, political and scientific subjects. The following subjects and speakers-in-charge were selected:—

(1) Democracy—Dr. Tara Chand.

(2) Economic Freedom and Economic Planning—Prof. S.K. Rudra and Prof. C. D. Thompson.

(3) Science in the service of man—Prof. A.C. Bannerjee.

(4) Social Justice and its Problems—Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. N. Sapru.

(5) Indian National Evolution—Dr. R. P. Tripathi

(6) The Indian Constitution—Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad.

(7) India in the International set-up—Shri Satya Charan.

In formulating and organising these lectures the Department received the unstinted cooperation and valuable assistance of the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Tara Chand and the teachers of the Allahabad University. Some of these lectures were made available to the reading public outside Allahabad in the form of symposiums published by the Department.

ECONOMIC PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Immediately after the office was shifted to Delhi, it took up the work of helping the Economic Programme Committee which was appointed by the A.I.C.C. in November 1947 to draft an economic programme for the Congress. The Department gave a large part of its time and energy to this Committee till its final report was drafted and placed before the A.I.C.C. at its Bombay Session in April 1948.

ABOLITION OF ZAMINDARI AND AGRARIAN REFORMS COMMITTEE

Another important subject in which the Department has been carrying on intensive research was Abolition of Zamindari. As early as September, 1946, it established contacts with the Provincial Governments and addressed them a questionnaire seeking information and statistical data without which it was

difficult to come to a decision on the question of Abolition of Zamindari. It submitted a preliminary note on Abolition of Zamindari (copies of which were addressed to the members of Working Committee and the Revenue Ministers) focussing attention on the major issues involved in the question, as well as giving an idea about the progress of work in different Provinces. At the Revenue Ministers' Conference, held in Delhi on 16 and 17 December, 1947 the Congress President was requested to appoint a committee of experts to examine and make recommendations regarding schemes of agrarian reforms which should follow in the wake of the Abolition of Zamindari System. The Congress President appointed a Committee of 9 members with Shri J. C. Kumarappa as chairman. Shri K. Mitra, the Secretary of the Economic Research Department of the A. I. C. C., was called upon to function as the Secretary of the Congress Agrarion Reforms Committee. This Committee is at present touring the Provinces and it is expected that the Committee will submit its report to the Congress President in April next.

STANDING ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

In addition to all the above varied work which the Department was called upon to undertake, the Standing Economic Committee appointed by the A. I. C. C. in April 1948 imposed fresh duties upon it. This Committee consisting of nine members with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman was formed to consider the implementation of the Congress Economic Programme more especially in regard to priorities and make recommendations from time to time. For efficient functioning of the Committee, it need not be said that, it should have an efficient secretariat. At a meeting of the Committee held in Delhi on 3 Sept. 1948, it was agreed that for the purpose of special study, assignment might be of various sectors of the economy of the country on the lines of the division of the Economic Programme, *viz.* (1) Industry, (2) Agriculture,

(3) Finance, (4) Trade; and so on. The Economic and Political Research Department of the A. I. C. C. which has been carrying on for some time the investigation of economic issues and the economic policy of the Governments, may effectively watch and observe the various sectors of the economy of the country if it is enlarged and strengthened.

P. C. C's. URGED TO ORGANISE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

But if this Department has to function effectively then it is necessary that every Provincial Congress Committee must organise a competent Research Department. At present, the Department has to depend mostly on the Government publicity literature which more often than not just fails to give it the information it requires. If there is a Research Department of the P. C. C., the A. I. C. C. Economic Department might send a copy of the letter addressed to the Government to the Research Department of the Provincial Congress Committee. It might get into direct touch with the department concerned and expedite matters.

In the government information literature the Department gets the ministry's achievement and their beneficent effects upon the people. This is helpful no doubt, yet it should like to have popular reactions to Government measures through the Research Departments of the Provincial Congress Committees, which may collect them through their subordinate bodies. The newspapers hardly give us accurate reports.

It might happen that the Government measure might fall short of the popular needs or it might be that the Government is going slow. It would do well to place facts and materials before the ministries. It might pace up their work. The Research Departments of the Provincial Congress Committees alone can collect such authentic facts.

They might also organise local simple surveys through District Congress Committees about matters like size of land holding, rate of agricultural wages, etc. These might be published as usual in short bulletins, or might be utilised for further researchs and framing legislative policies.

NEED OF A CONSULTATIVE BOARD OF ECONOMISTS AND EXPERTS

The Department urgently feels, the need of a Consultative Board of Economists and Experts to guide it in its work. This Board to be useful should be as far as possible representative of the various provinces. There has not been uniform development of the country and also due to geological, climatic and cultural differences existing in the different parts of our country the solution of the same problem cannot be wholly identical.

Till the formation of such a Board the Research Department of the Provincial Congress Committee might contact the local economists and experts and get their opinions of Government measures as also on current problems. These opinions will be highly useful for the work of this Department. Even when the Board is formed, the Research Department or the Provincial Congress Committee will have to contact the members of the Board of the Province as well as others who are equally eminent but not on the Board.

The Department visualises the work of economic research of the All India Congress Committee being carried on with the full consciousness of the needs and welfare of the masses in complete cooperation with the Provincial Congress Committees, the Provincial Governments and the body of experts and economists,

CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

The Central Parliamentary Board which consists of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Petel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh and Shri Shankarrao Deo, regulates and co-ordinates the parliamentary activities of the Congress Legislative Parties. The Working Committee by a recent resolution decided that the Parliamentary activities in the acceding States should be subject to the same control as similar activities in the existing provinces of Indian Union. For this purpose the Board was directed to issue necessary instructions and to frame rules for the guidance of the ministries in the States, in terms of the connected resolutions passed by W.C. and A.I.C.C. (Ref- June, 1937, June, 1939, Aug, 46).

BOARD'S GUIDANCE FOR MINISTRIES

With the assumption of this fresh responsibility, the Board has enough work before it. The Provincial and States Ministries need constant guidance from the Board which alone is competent to examine the administrative methods followed by them and see how far these conform with the ideals and ideas set before the country by the Congress through its resolutions passed from time to time and by the explicit declarations and pronouncements of its leaders.' The Ministers working in the respective administrative areas have, no doubt, specified problems to solve and have to adjust their programme of action to the requirements and needs of the locality which vary with varying environments and other resources, geographic, economic and cultural; but the fundamental objectives must never be lost sight of. The economic and political pragramme outlined in the Congress election manifesto has evidently raised expectations in the minds of the

people and it is up to the Minitries to carry out the programme in full by the effective implementation of the sam? with courage and zeal. The Parliamentary Board through its clear directives has to regulate the activities of these ministers and the Party members in the different legislatures so as to develop a spirit of discipline, service and devotedness. Unity in the midst of diversity is ensured only when it is brought to bear on the members in charge of administration and the parliamentarians that the work in the legislature is nothing but an extension of the field of constructive activities of the Congress meant for the social and economic well-being of the people. The Parliamentary Board is the Central Co-ordinating link between the Minister, the legislative party, the Congress organisation and the people at large and any departure from the fundamental principles accepted by the Congress has to be set right by its guiding influence.

CONGRESS ORGANISATION AND MINISTRY

Though, in general, the Ministries in the provinces have popular support in their parliamentary activities, in some cases considerable divergence of opinion has been created over some vital issues between the provincial Ministries and the provincial Congress organisations and its seriousness can hardly be minimised. The Parliamentary Board have received complaints from the Provincial Congress Committees that the Ministers went so far as to ignore outright the advice tendered by the Congress organisation which sought to represent popular viewpoint in a dispassionate manner. They felt that the Ministers have developed a nonchalant attitude and this placed the Congress organisations in an unenviable position in as much as they had, as a matter of course, to come in direct contact with the people who held them accountable for the omissions and commissions of the Congress Ministries.

On the other hand, it has been represented to the Parliamentary Board by the Ministers that the Congress organisations occasionally took upon themselves the role of supra-governmental authority, intent on imposing their will on the administration so much so that the day-to-day administration has not been left immune and that it has created a sense of insecurity amongst the services which would surely impair their efficiency and affect the continuity of administrative policy.

It is obvious that the exact relationship between the Congress organisation and the Ministers in charge of administrative work has not been properly estimated resulting in the development of this unhappy tension which stands in the way of proper working of the Congress organisation as well as of the administration.

A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION—JUNE, 1939

In June 1939, the A. I. C. C. on the recommendation of the Working Committee enunciated in unmistakable terms the policy that in administrative matters the P. C. C's should not interfere with the discretion of the Ministry but it was always open to the executive of the P. C. C. to draw the attention of the Government privately to any particular abuse or difficulty. In matters of policy if there was a difference between the Ministry and the P. C. C., reference should be made to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Public discussion in such matters should be avoided.

PRESIDENT'S DIRECTIONS

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, took serious view of this growing rift between the two wings of the Congress – Organisational and Parliamentary—and addressed letters to Premiers and Congress Committees of all the Provinces. He gave definite directions in the matter asking them to adhere to the principles outlined in the A. I. C. C.

resolutions and suggesting that some liaison should be established between the provincial Government and the P. C. C. which could help smoothen matters rnd remove legitimate complaints of the public. The Agency might be utilised on provincial level for mutual consultations to evolve the policy and administrative schemes of the ministry. Unfortunately, no definite move has as yet been taken in this direction in many provinces.

PARLIAMENTARY BOARD AND LEGISLATIONS

The Board had been asked occasionally to give its guidance to the provincial Ministries whenever legislative Bills of vital importance and having an all-India bearing were introduced in the Assembly and Council. The Zamindari Abolition Bill in Bihar and in Madras raised controversy in the provinces and the Ministries sought the opinion of the Parliamentary Board it different stages. The Board gave more than once opportunities to the parties affected to place their case before the Board. On some occasions there was joint consultation between the Board, the Ministers and the parties concerned. The Bills were examined in detail in the A. I. C C. Office and the decision of the Board was duly communicated to the ministers who proceeded with the Bill in terms of the direction issued from the Board.

The office has started collecting materials from the different administrative areas regarding legislative measures undertaken by the Ministries with special reference to the nation-building programme, such as rural development schemes, setting up of Gao Hukumat, Village Panchayat and Nyaya Panchayat, Abolition of Zamindari, Prohibition, Revival of Cottage Industries, Basic Education, Irrigation Project, Water and Power Works, and safeguarding of citizens' rights and other allied Bills which would bring about a revolutionary change in the economic structure of the country. But unfortunately the Congress Ministries and parties in legislatures have not realised the importance of this work and the response is not what it ought to be. Unless the

Parliamentary Board is given all co-operation to develop this side of its work, it will not be in a position to discharge its functions properly.

THE BOARD AND SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

With regard to nomination of candidates for election to Legislatures, the P C.C's have to forward their recommendations to the Board for final approval. The Board has noted with regret that the P. C. C's generally send the list of their nominees only a few days before the date fixed by the Governments for submission of nomination paper and as such the Board hardly finds time to scrutinise the claims of all the candidates. The P. C. C's sometimes telegraphically seek the approval of the Board. The Board being the final authority is expected to examine the connected papers and, if necessary, to give opportunities to the candidates, whose applications have been rejected, to place their cases before the Board, before the sanction is given and it is essential that the petitions of all candidates should be sent to the Board along with the recommendations of the P. C. C's and sufficient time must be given so as to allow the Board to hear appeals from the applicants. This is absolutely necessary if everybody in the country is to feel confident that he will get fair-play and justice in the hands of the highest authority in parliamentary activities of the Congress.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENT AND THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

In July, 1946, the Working Committee appointed an Expert Committee with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman and Sri K. M. Munshi, Sri Asaf Ali, Sri K. T. Shah, Shri K. Santhanam, Sri D.V. Gadgil, Sri N.G. Iyengar and Sri Humayan Kabir as members for the purpose of preparing material for the Constituent Assembly. The Committee co-opted Sri Krishna Kripalani as a member and Convener of the Committee and a special department started working in the A.I.C.C. Office. Relevant information and data necessary for the work of the Consti-

tuent Assembly were collected and the co-ordination between the Congress members of the Constituent Assembly was maintained by joint deliberations in which the Expert Commitee's guidance was most helpful. In 1948, after the publication of the recommendations of the Drafting Committee on Indian Constitution some prominent scholars were invited by the Parliamentary Department to study the provisions of the Draft Constitution in all its implications. The several articles had been gone through with meticulous care and diligence and critical notes were prepared in the light of comparative study of constitutions of other countries of the world. Arrangements have been made to keep the department in close touch with the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly by regular attendance in its sittings and in the Party meetings.

RESEARCH SECTIONS

It has been increasingly felt that a well-equipped Research Section should be started under the direct supervision of the Board, where a few scholars might be engaged in studying specified subjects affecting the vital interests of the country in all their bearings and place before the Board the result of their investigation. This would necessarily help the Ministries in having proper and scientific appreciation of undertakings before they embark on the same.

Publication of brochures and other informative literature through this department will directly help in disseminating political ideas amongst the people.

CONGRESS SEVA DAL.

After the "Quit India" struggle when the Congress was legalised and began to function normally, Major General Shah Nawaz was asked at the instance of the Working Committee to undertake the reorganisation of Congress volunteers. He visited in person some provinces in this connection, and had

some conferences in Bombay and Delhi, where Presidents and Secretaries of the P. C. C's and men and women who have worked and are interested in the Volunteer movement were present. A Volunteers conference also was held at New Delhi under the presidentship of Dr. N. S. Hardikar. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the conference and placed before the volunteers his ideas regarding work which they were supposed to do under the changed conditions. Major General Shah Nawaz addressed the conference.

In March 1947, the Congress Working Committee at its Delhi meeting passed the constitution of Congress Seva Dal, which is now in force.

On 4th May 1947 the Working Committee accepted the resignation of Major General Shah Nawaz and entrusted the Volunteer Department to the General Secretaries. Thereupon Shri Shankarrao Deo sought the help of Dr. N. S. Hardikar in conducting the department. Dr. Hardikar readily and unconditionally agreed to give the help.

Full time services of two old workers of the Hindustani Seva Dal were requisitioned at the instance of Dr. Hardikar. Shri V.M. Hardikar, ex-Dalapromukh of Rastra Seva Dal, Maharastra, and Shri S. V. Inamdar, the then G.O.C. of Congress Seva Dal, Gujarat, joined the Centre. Since then the work of reorganising the Congress Volunteer Organisation in the country is going on and making progress steadily. It should, however, be pointed out here that some of the Provincial Congress Committees and their Volunteer Boards are not yet fully doing their work in this behalf.

The Centre has been trying to bring about a uniformity in the training of Seva Dal volunteers. For this purpose three all India camps were held. One held at Delhi in July 1947, was for G.O.C's. of all provinces. 27 Officers

were given a Refreshers' Course for 9 days. 46 cadets were given Organisers' Course at Bombay in September 1947. It lasted for 24 days. The third camp was conducted at Dehradun in June 1948. 29 cadets were given Instructors' Course which lasted for five weeks.

With a view to facilitate exchange of views and to get a first hand idea of work which was carried on in various provinces, a conference of G.O.C's was held at the time of the A.I.C.C. Session at Bombay in April 1948. This attempt at bringing uniformity in training has proved a success. Many of those who have been trained by the Centre are now working in their own provinces as Instructors and are training their youths according to the training course chalked out by the Centre.

ORGANISATIONAL UNIFORMITY

With a view to bring about uniformity in Seva Dal organisation in provinces, Seva Dal Manuals No. 1 and 2 have been published by the Central Office. The first one gives organisational details of Seva Dal while the second gives an idea how the organisation should function. 'Training courses' for men, women, as well as for boys and girls have also been sent to provinces. To maintain uniformity in thought as regards problems common to provinces, notes and statements were issued from time to time Eight such notes have been issued so far on subjects such as private armies, home guards, military training, Seva Dal activities, Seva Dal workers, etc.

A news sheet named Dal Samachar is issued every month and circulated to all the provinces. For the knowledge of public an information series has recently been started. Two pamphlets have been brought out so far. Contact with cadets

trained in all India camps is regularly maintained through correspondence as well as through periodical circular letters.

TOURS, VISITS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

During the period under report Dr. Hardikar and his assistants visited U. P, Bihar, Gujarat, Tamil Nad, Mysore, Nagpur, Mahakoshal, and Bombay, and supervised the work that was being carried on, and guided the workers in the respective provinces.

Shri Nand Kumar Deo Vasisth, G. O. C. of United Provinces was sent to Bihar to study the Volunteer Organisation of that province and to report. His tours had a tremenous effect upon the young folks of those areas. Since then many have joined Congress Seva Dal.

The Central Office had sent some of the workers of Seva Dal to Kurukshetra Refugee Camp. The workers under Shri V. M. Hardikar rendered satisfactory service to the refugees.

Attempts were made to keep contact with the Provincial Governments in their schemes and activities of Civic Guards, etc.

The Central Office also tried to gather opinion from the provinces on the question of National Anthem. It has collected information about Flags of various countries in the world.

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

From the chart published elsewhere it will be seen that Seva Dal has spread practically in all provinces. The spirit of Seva Dal has decidedly come to stay The main difficulty in the way of progress is lack of funds,

and also lack of full support from local Congress leaders at certain places.

The Home Guards and Raksha Dal activities have created misunderstanding to some extent in the ranks of Seva Dal but as it is merely a passing phase, it cannot permanently affect the Dal.

It is worth noting that Seva Dal units have acted as peace brigades and have rendered help to refugees in places like Delhi, Gujarat, Nagpur, Bengal, Bombay and U.P.

To carry on Congress activities of constructive nature is a normal work done by Seva Dal in provinces where it functions.

A number of training camps with a view to impart training in different training courses framed by the Central Office, were conducted in many provinces during the period under report.

In some provinces Volunteer Boards are publishing bulletins in their provincial languages. These bulletins are very popular amongst the members of Seva Dal.

SEVA DAL MEMBERSHIP

1.	Ajmer	—	200
2.	Assam	—	28,000
3.	Andhra	—	1,781
4.	Bihar	—	10,288
5.	Bengal	—	9,274
6.	Bombay	—	2,362
7.	Delhi	—	422
8.	Gujarat		13,766

9.	Karnatak	—	1 000
10.	Kerala	—	625
11.	Maharashtra	—	11,568
12.	Mahakoshal	—	2,440
13.	Nagpur	—	16,691
14.	Tamil Nad	—	9,700
15.	United Provinces	—	46,974
16.	Vidharbha	—	12,265
			1,67,356

The total number of membership in Congress Seva Dal is 1,67,356. It is gradually rising. Before the end of 1948 it may go to 2 lacs.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT

After the withdrawal of ban on the Congress, the A. I. C. C. Secretariat and the Congress President began receiving a large number of representations from labour with regard to their grievances. With the increase of labour unrest on account of the deterioration of economic conditions, the Working Committee reviewed the labour situation of the country and passed two important resolutions on labour situation at Wardha on August 13th, 1946. The first resolution reads: "The Labour troubles in the country have been aggravated by the total absence of a well-defined national plan or policy in dealing with the claims of this class, by the delay in redressing grievances by means of conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, and by confusion arising out of the unco-ordinated action taken in the matter in different parts of the country." By the second resolution Congress gave recognition to Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.

LABOUR SECTION IN ECONOMICS DEPTT.

The Congress felt that it was not possible for it to give correct lead and direction to the Indian Working Class, without being in full possession of facts on labour problems and labour movement of the country. The A. I. C. C. Secretariat was being reorganised and in the new set up, the work of the labour was to be looked after by the Economics and Political Research Department which opened a labour wing for the purpose.

The newly set up labour wing felt the paucity of labour data and, to get up-to-date information on the subject, it issued a questionnaire to all P. C. C's, Provincial Governments, Central Government and Labour Organisations. The response to the questionnaire was lukewarm.

ALLAHABAD CONFERENCE & MAPARA NOTE

In February 1947, a Conference of Presidents and Secretaries of the P. C. C's was convened at Allahabad by Shri Shankarrao Deo, General Secretary, A. I. C. C. Labour situation was discussed and after some discussion a note on labour submitted by Shri G. Mapara on behalf of the H.M.S.S. was approved by the Conference. Provincial labour-sub-committees were formed in most of the provinces.

In April 1947, the labour wing of the Congress submitted a note on the need for a new organisation of labour on nationalist line.

FORMATION OF INTUC—MAY 1947

In May 1947, Indian National Trade Union Congress was formed at New Delhi. Organisationally, it has no connection with the Indian National Congress. However, the Working Committee during its sitting at Delhi (Sep-Oct, 1947) considered representations received in connection with work in labour field by Congressmen and Congress Committees. The Working

Committee extended its recognition to the newly formed I. N. T. U. C. and recommended to all Congressmen to get those unions which they were organising and of which they were members, affiliated to the newly formed I. N. T. U. C.

A book on "Congress and Labour Movement" was published by A. I. C. C. in November 1947.

Some misunderstanding among Congressmen was caused by the Working Committee resolution supporting I. N. T. U. C. Shri Shankarrao Deo, General Secretary, A. I. C. C., clarified the misunderstanding, by issuing a statement on 21 Nov. 47, pointing out that the said resolution was no doubt recommendatory in character as all its resolutions were, but nevertheless, all Congressmen were expected to abide by it.

NANDA'S NOTE AND LABOUR SUB-COMMITTEE

The Working Committee during its sitting on 21st and 22nd April, 1948 considered the note on labour submitted by Shri Gulzarilal Nanda. The Committee decided that a full-fledged labour department be created in the A. I. C. C. Secretariat, and further it appointed the following committee for the purpose of directing and co-ordinating Congress work in the entire field of labour :

1. Dr Rajendra Prasad
2. Shri Shankarrao Deo
3. Shri Gulzarilal Nanda
4. Prof N. G. Ranga
5. Shri Sampurnanand.

The Committee met in May 1948 at Dr Rajendra Prasad's residence and discussed matters pertaining to Labour organisation, finance, etc.

In pursuance of the Working Committee's decision, Labour Department of the A. I. C. C. was set up in August 1948 and it was decided that the main object of this department would be as follows :

1. To study the labour problems and to look after the genuine grievances of the working class, including agricultural labour, from close quarters with sympathy.

2. To give effective help and support to I. N. T. U. C. which cherishes the same socio-economic ideals as the Congress.

3. To bring in unity and solidarity in the working class movement.

4. To spread and popularise Congress ideology and programme among the workers.

5. To bring in uniformity in labour legislation among the provinces and States.

6. To achieve industrial peace and democracy.

The Department sent circulars in September 1948 to all P. C. C's and Labour Ministers of the Provinces and Centre. In response to this the Department has started receiving information and publications asked for.

The department intends to take up publication work of brochures and pamphlets on Labour Movement in the Country.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME DEPARTMENT

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress at its meeting of the 7th March 1947 appointed a Constructive Programme Committee of the following persons :

(1) Shri Shankarrao Deo

(2) Shri Profulla Chandra Ghosh

(3) Shri Jugal Kishore

(4) Shri R. R. Diwakar

(5) Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani

(6) Shri Krishna Das Jaju

(7) Shri Aryanayakam

(8) Shri J. C. Kumarappa

(9) Shri Jairamdas Daulatram

with a view to guide and advise the Provincial Congress Committees and the general public to carry out certain specific items of the Constructive Programme. These itoms of the Constructive Programme were :

(1) Khadi, (2) Village Industries, (3) Basic Education, (4) Harijan Work, (5) Adult Education and (6) Hindustani Prachar.

COMMITTEE MEETTING—APRIL, 1947

The first Meeting of the Constructive Programme Committee was held on the 26th and 27th of April, 1947, in Delhi and the Committee decided to allocate to each member other than the representatives of the Constructive work organisations, different items of the Constructive Programme :

(1) Shri Shankarrao Deo ... Khadi

(2) Shri Profulla Chandra Ghosh ... Village Industries

(3) Shri Jairamdas Daulatram ... Harijan work

(4) Shri R. R. Diwakar ... Literacy and Hindustani Prachar

(5) Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani ... Basic Education

The members-in-charge submitted their proposals to the Committee regarding the items of work entrusted to them. The

Committee after giving careful consideration to the proposal chalked out a programme of work to be done by the Provincial Constructive Programme Committees through their respective Constructive Programme Departments. The programme was circulated to the P. C. C's by the A. I. C. C. Circular No. 21 of 14-5-47 (See Congress Bulletin No. 4, 1947).

In order to coordinate the activities of the Constructive Programme Committees and the Provincial Ministers it was deemed necessary that both should work in close cooperation though independently. The Congress Ministries being the creation of the Congress were naturally expected to carry out the several items of the Constructive Programme. If the Congress through this Committee also undertook to work out the same items of the programme and started collecting funds for the same, an embarrassing situation was likely to be created. After a good deal of discussion the committee decided as follows:

(a) It is necessary and desirable to have agencies independent of the Government carrying out different items of the Constructive Programme as they alone can make new and bold experiments which could later be taken up by the Government agencies to be worked out departmentally.

(b) The Constructive Programme Committee undertaking this work will try to entertain the most cordial relations with the Ministries and will work in full cooperation with them.

(c) The Committee will try to secure as much help from the Ministries as the Ministries are in a position to give and collect funds if and where

necessary in the spirit of perfect understanding with the Ministries.

(d) The Constructive Programme Committee will also make definite proposals to the Ministries with regard to any items of work that they would wish the Ministries to take up and carry out, and offer full cooperation to them in that task.

ORGANISATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Committee also decided to open a Constructive Programme Department in the A.I.C.C. and put Shri Raghunath Rao Dhotre of Sewagram, Wardha, in-charge of this Department. The Department started functioning from May 1947. Shri Ramadhar Bhai later on joined the Department as its Assistant Secretary.

The first move of the Constructive Programme Department was the creation of a requisite machinery in the provinces to carry out the programme chalked by the Constructive Programme Committee. The Provincial Congress Committees were urged :

(1) To appoint Provincial Constructive Programme Committees in terms of the Allahabad Resolution.

(2) To send a list of three persons nominated by the Provincial Congress Executives, one of them to be selected by the A.I.C.C. office to take up the work of the Secretary-in-charge of the Constructive Programme Department of the P.C.C.

(3) To draw up a plan of work for the provinces on the lines laid down by the Central Constructive Programme Committee

Some of the Provincial Congress Committees have drawn up some plans for their respective provinces and have gone some way in implementing them.

Four whole-time Secretaries-in-charge of the Constructive Programme Departments were appointed in Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Kerala with the approval of the A.I.C.C., which agreed to pay their monthly allowances.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING DECEMBER, 1947

After a couple of months' experience of the working of the Provincial Constructive Programme Committees it was generally felt that the Congress organisations in different provinces were too much pre-occupied with power-politics and therefore it was difficult to do much in the sphere of reconstruction through them. After some consultations it was decided to call a meeting of the Central Constructive Programme [illegible] the mitttee in December 1947 in Delhi. Certain other [illegible]formation programme organisations were also holding their mee[illegible] Delhi during that time. In these meetings Gandhiji was al[illegible] present. Gandhiji attended the meeting of the Central Constructive Programme Committee also. After careful consideration of the general situation in the country the Committee felt that it was necessary to unite and co-ordinate the work of various individuals and organisations engaged in Constructive Programme throughout the length and breadth of the country. Bapu also approved of this idea. It was therefore resolved that a representative gathering of Constructive Programme workers should meet at Sevagram in January or February 1948 when Bapu was also expected to be present.

WARDHA CONFERENCE AND SARVODAYA SAMAJ

Preparations were made for holding the Conference and Shri Dhotre worked as the Convener. But the greatest tragedy was in store for India. On 30th January, 1948, a fanatic young-man put an end to Mahatmaji's life. His absence retarded the progress of every type of constructive activity. Nevertheless the workers engaged in constructive activities in different parts of the country assembled at Sevagram in March, 1948 and laid the foundation of Sarvodaya Samaj in order to bring about the new order of Gandhiji's conception through his constructive programme. Shri Dhotre was appointed as the Secretary of the Sarvodaya Samaj and therefore his field of activity was again shifted to Wardha.

In April, 1948, the A.I.C.C. adopted the New Constitution for the Congress which gave special prominence to the Constructive Programme by insisting on the effective member of the Congress to devote regularly a part of the time to some form of national or constructive activity. Since Effective membership forms the corner-stone in the constitution it is expected that it would result in placing the constructive programme on a firmer footing. The problem of effective implementation of this programme still remains. A pamphlet containing the extracts from the writings and utterances of Mahatma Gandhi relating to the constructive programme has been recently published.

The Constructive Programme Committee met in September 1948 to review the progress of the work done. The Committee felt that most of the P. C. C's have not taken up the work seriously due to many difficulties. The Committee has, therefore, proposed that only two or three items of work may be taken up which will be within the means of the

District Congress Committee to implement and which the Provincial Governments themselves are anxious to enforce and which they are not able to do on an excessive scale due to the apathy of the people. The Constructive Programme Committee therefore has suggested that the District Congress Committee can help to educate public opinion and to mobilise it so that they may be able to take full advantage of the Government Schemes. These items relate to the formation of multi-purpose Co-operative Society and the dissemination of useful knowledge to the adults, removal of illiteracy and such other items of local importance which the Panchayat or District Committees think useful.

The Constructive Programme Committee further suggested that if the Working Committee accepted these proposals they might be circulated to the P.C.C's concerned.

These proposals were placed before the Working Committee who suggested that they might be incorporated in the programme which would be placed before the Jaipur Session.

A circular to the P.C.C's has been issued seeking information of the constructive activities that are being done in the different provinces. After accurate and detailed information is gathered, it will be published in the form of a book. It will give us some idea as to where we stand. After it is done, it will be necessary to reconsider the ways and means of implementing the constructive programme in order to shape India after Gandhiji's ideal and evolve "a perfect democracy based upon individual freedom."

CONGRESS ORGANISATION IN STATES

The Standing Committee of the All India States People's Conference at its Bombay meeting on 25th April 1948 passed a resolution that it was no longer necessary for the A.I.S.P.C. to

continue functioning as a separate organisation. The Standing Committee recommended that the formal dissolution of the Organisation be considered at a special session of the Conference and that meanwhile Praja Mandals should continue to function and should keep in line with the general policy of the Indian National Congress with regard to States and should conform to the transitory provisions in the Congress Constitution relating to the States.

In terms of the above resolution of the Standing Committee of the A.I.S.P.C., the Working Committee decided that for the purpose of Congress organisation the Praja Mandals be reorganised as Congress Committees, and the Regional Councils as Provincial Congress Committees, and the A.I.C.C. in its Bombay session adopted a resolution as follows:

(1) Whereas the new Constitution will take some time before it can be fully implemented; and

(2) Whereas it is desirable that the provision relating to the extension of Congress organisation to the States in the fullest measure be brought into force during the interim period;

(3) It is hereby resolved that the Working Committee be authorised to arrange for the inclusion of not more than 30 members in the All India Congress Committee from the States and settle all necessary details incident to the changes referred to in Para 2 supra.

STATES SUB-COMMITTEE

A sub-committee of the Working Committee was appointed in July 1948, for reviewing the different questions that had arisen in connection with the implementation of the Working

Committee resolution mentioned above and for making recommendations regarding the organisational set up of the Congress in the different States. The Committee included Shri Shankarro Deo, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh, Shri Gokulbhai Bhatt, Shri Kanayalal Desai and Shri Kamal Nayan Bajaj, who toured extensively in the States, collected relevant data and submitted their report. Accordingly, the Committee resolved that five P.C.C's should be newly constituted so as to include as their component parts Unions and States in the following manner:

THE FIVE NEW P.C.C's.

(i) Rajputana P.C.C. .... Rajasthan Union, Matsya Union, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer

It was agreed that Sirohi and Danta States should continue provisionally to be attached to Rajputana P. C. C.

(ii) Madhya Bharat P.C.C. ... Gwalior-Indore-Malwa Union and Bhopal

(iii) Vindhya Pradesh P.C.C. ... Rewa and Bundhelkhand

(iv) Himachal Pradesh P.C.C. ... Himachal States and Bilaspur

(v) Patiala and E. Punjab States Union P.C.C. ... Patiala and East Punjab States

Narnaul Dadri and Bhawal should be constituted into a District Congress Committee attached to this province,

and that the following P.C.C's will extend their jurisdiction over the States marked against them:

P.C.C. JURISDICTION EXTENDED

(i) Utkal P. C. C.	Mayurbhan
(ii) Maharashtra P. C. C,	Kolhapur
(iii) Gujarat P. C. C.	Saurashtra, Baroda and Cutch
(iv) United Provinces P.C.C.	Tehri-Garhwal, Rampur and Banaras
(v) W. Bengal P. C. C.	Cooch-Behar.

PROCEDURE OF ELECTION OF DELEGATES AND A. I. C. C. MEMBERS FROM STATES

And it was decided that the delegates to the Meerut Congress Session returned from the provinces should be delegates to the Jaipur Session provided, however, that if the number of delegates fell short of the quota to which the province was entitled on the basis of one delegate for every lakh of population, the delegates to the Gwalior Session of the A. I. S. P. C. from that region should form an electorate and elect the required number from amongst themselves. Further it was decided that after the P. C. C's were duly formed they should directly elect members to the A. I. C. C. according to the Congress Constitution and that after these elections have taken place the members nominated by the Working Committee to represent the States in the A. I. C. C. should cease to be so.

KERALA AND KARNATAK P. C. C's PARLIAMENTARY AUTONOMY IN STATES

With respect to Travancore and Cochin, and Mysore and Coorg, it was decided that the existing Congress organisations of Kerala and Karnatak should continue so that the Kerala P. C. C. would include Travancore and Cochin and the

Karnatak P. C. C. would include Mysore and Coorg, provided that in matters concerning parliamentary activities, the autonomy of each administrative unit falling within the jurisdiction of the P. C. C. should be secured and maintained. For that purpose, an Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of members of P. C. C. from the respective areas, should be set up in each administrative area for conducting its parliamentary activities.

MERGED STATES

With respect of the states which merged themselves administratively to the adjoining provinces such as Chhattisgarh States in C. P., Eastern States in Orissa, Kathiawar States in in Gujarat, Deccan States in Bombay, it was decided that these should be brought under the jurisdiction of the P. C. C's in the respective areas of those provinces.

ASSAM TO INCLUDE TRIPURA, MANIPUR AND LUSHAI HILLS

The Working Committee, by a separate resolution, extended the jurisdiction of the Assam P. C. C. over Tripura, Manipur and Lushai Hills and directed that each of these States should be free to conduct its parliamentary activities including election to the Legislature and Local Bodies, subject to the control of the Central Parliamentary Board and Central Election Committee and that these units should be free to transact their affairs in their own respective languages.

In pursuance of the resolutions adopted by the Working Committee, the organisational set up in the States has been finalised and the representatives from these respective states have already taken their seats in the P. C. C's, including the five newly-formed P. C. C's of Rajputana, Madhya Bharat, Himachal, Vindhya Pradesh and East Punjab States Union, and the delegates therefrom participated in the presidential election held in October, 1948.

DISPUTES AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Since the advent of political power into the hands of the Congress, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of disputes and breaches of discipline which, if not speedily dealt with, might disrupt the Congress Organisation and make it an ineffective instrument for rendering effective service to the people of the country. The Congress Working Committee has been alive to the need for such action and has taken steps to remedy it. It has also re-framed the rules regarding disciplinary action which are intended to deal speedily with breaches of discipline and to prevent any prejudiced action being taken by the Disciplinary Committees.

These disputes partly arise out of the Congress elections and partly in connetction with the selection of condidates for the various legislatures and local board bodies. These disputes are now sought to be minimised and where they occur readily settled by the machinery that has been set up to deal with them. The new Constitution provides for the formation of Credentials Committees and Election Tribunals, which would scrutinise the enlistment of members and the latter would deal with the irregularities committed during the election. In dealing with disputes arising out of selection of candidates, Election Committees have been set up in many provinces which would submit the names of candidates for final approval of the Central Parliamentary Board according to the rules framed by the Working Committee. It is hoped that those provisions would go a long way to reduce the number of disputes and in dealing speedily and effectively where they do arise.

For the guidance of Provincial Election Tribunals and the District Tribunals the Working Committee prescribed definite rules through its resolution passed in Bombay, December 11, 1946, and these disciplinary rules have recently been revised by the Working Committee in its meeting of September 5, 6, 1948,

in New Delhi. These would ensure speedy and impartial disposal of all disputes.

PANEL OF SIX TO ASSIST PRESIDENT

The Working Committee by its resolution dated 24th January, 1948, appointed a panel of following persons for giving assistance to the Congress President in investigating into cases of breach of discipline and violation of the provisions of the Constitution, when such cases are either referred to it by the aggrieved party or when the President finds it necessary to institute inquiry in cases which have come to his notice.

1. Shri S. K. Patil
2. Shri R. R. Diwakar
3. Prof. N. G. Ranga
4. Shri Seth Govind Das
5. Shri Satyanarayan Sinha

and 6. Acharya Jugal Kishore.

These members have been really helpful to the President by readily agreeing to visit different provinces in connection with the disputes and in making their recommendations after holding local enquiry.

With the assumption of political power by the Congress there has been an increasing tendency on the part of some people to capture the machinery of the Congress and to utilise it in furthering their individual or sectional interest. This tendency is being checked by various measures adopted by the Congress Working Committee and by providing in the Constitution such articles as would help to check their abuse. The Congress Constitution has been revised to make the Congress a more compact and disciplined body. Four-anna membership which led to many corrupt practices and bogus membership has been abolished

to prevent undesirable persons or groups from capturing Congress. Similarly the formation of separate political parties within the Congress has been banned and the elections have been made triennial so that there are fewer occasions for Congress elections and with a view to enable the Congress Committees to concentrate their time and energies on constructive programme extending over three years.

The Congress organisation can only maintain its integrity and its usefulness if the Provincial and Subordinate Congress Committees are jealous of the prestige and influence the Congress commands. It is for them to see that Congress work is carried on in the spirit of service and without friction amongst the members.

A.I.C.C. LIBRARY

With the beginning of the National Struggle in 1942 the All India Congress Committee Secretariat was taken possession of by the Government of U.P. and the Office and Library were sealed and locked up for a period of three years. As a result, the Library books were moth-eaten and badly damaged. At the end of 1945, attempts were made to set the Library in proper order and in three years' time, it has grown up into a moderately-equipped library. At present the Library contains about 7000 volumes on subjects like Gandhi and Gandhism, Indian National Congress, Religion, Politics, Law, Economics, History and Geography, Hindi and English Literature.

The receipt of Daily, Weekly and Monthly papers and magazines is very encouraging.

	Daily	*Weekly*	*Monthly*
Hindi	20	37	25
English	25	39	36
Other Languages	40	17	11
	85	93	72

It is proposed to expand the library with a view to make it more useful for research work and for reference purposes.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT

It is now a little over two years since we met at Meerut for the last Congress Session. A cursory view of the changes in the A.I.C.C. Office immediately before Meerut and after it, would show that several Departments which had ceased functioning due to launching of the national struggles of 1940 and 1942 were reorganised when in 1946 the new President and General Secretaries took charge of their offices and interested themselves in the office. Shri Sadiq Ali, Permanent Secretary and Shri Krishna Kripalani, who was appointed as the Organising Secretary, started organising the following Departments of the office.

1. Economics and Political Research Department with a labour section.
2. Foreign Department.
3. Indians Overseas Department.
4. Volunteer Department.
5. Middle-East Department.
6. Publication Department.
7. Constructive Programme Department.
8. General Department.

The General Department of the A.I.C.C. Office is responsible for the smooth running of the entire office and is directly connected with the Provincial Congress headquarters. The Department consists of the Permanent Secretary, Office Superintendent, four Stenographers, two Typists, two Assistants etc. The General Department has attached to

it Departments like the Library, Hindi and Urdu Department and Cutting Department.

The total number of letters received in the office after the Meerut session up-to-date is about 9,000 and that despatched 15,000. About 75 circulars on different subjects such as Congress Organisation, Seva Dal, Parliamentary Board, Congress Constitution, National Day Celebrations, have been sent to the P.C.C's. The Congress bulletin which is issued from time to time contains the full proceedings of, and the resolutions passed by, the Working Committee and A.I.C.C. meetings, and also circulars and statements issued from this office. Seven issues of the bulletin were brought out in 1947 and five issues have been published so far this year.

HEADQUARTERS SHIFTED TO DELHI MARCH, 1948.

The shifting of the office to New Delhi has created certain problems in the smooth and efficient running of the office. A part of the office was shifted in October 1947. The question of shifting the whole office was considered later by the Working Committee and the office was shifted to New Delhi in the middle of March 1948. With this shifting, several old hands left the office and fresh appointments were made. Shri Sadiq Ali, Permanent Secretary joined the U.P. Lok Sevak Sangh, as its General Secretary and took up its organisation work in the province. Two other members joined Diplomatic service of the Government of India and were sent abroad. The office, after being set up at 7 Jantar Mantar Road, was expanded and to meet the increased demand of work, the following had to be constituted into separate Departments.

1. States Department.
2. Parliamentary Board Department.
3. Complaints and Appeals Department.
4. Students Department.
5. Labour Department.

With the expansion of the office the bulk of correspondence and work increased, and it will be sometime before work in the office can be organised in the desired way. Under-staff and want of sufficient accommodation are the main impediments to the different departments to function efficiently.

STAFF ACCOMMODATION

The question of permanent accommodation for the office and for the staff, though decided by the Working Committee, has yet to be solved. A few staff members are at present accommodated in the office premises and the others have made their own arrangements. Proper accommodation for the staff is sure to contribute to the efficient working of the office and the sooner this question is satisfactorily settled the better for all concerned.

PRESS CUTTING DEPARTMENT

The Press Cutting Department of the A.I.C.C. has its own importance, because it supplies necessary data and material to the various departments, on which they work and carry on their activities.

The General Secretaries are always kept informed about the current and critical events in the country. The Department keeps clippings on various subjects, internal and external.

About 125 files are maintained under different heads, the more prominent being :—

(1) Abolition of Zamindari. (2) Industries. (3) Finance, Inflation etc. (4) Trade. (5) Planning. (6) Labour. (7) Local Self-Government. (8) Education. (9) Formation of Linguistic Provinces. (10) Relief & Rehabilitation. (11) Minorities. (12) Adminstration of Central and Provincial Governments. (13) Backward Classes. (14) Congress Seva Dal. (15) Indian States. (16) The Indian National Congress. (17) The other Parties. (18) The Leaders. (19). The U. N. O. (20) Indians Overseas.

After the achievement of Independence on 15th August, 1947, the people have become more politically conscious and are always interested to know the march of events which affect their daily lives. The Government's policy and programme can hardly pass without popular comment. The people immediately react to Government-sponsored scheme and give expressions to their ideas without reserve. It is, therefore, one of the main functions of the Clipping Department to record the activities of the Provincial Ministries and to collect all the available information regarding the policy and programme of action determined by the Ministries and the people's reactions to the same.

This Department has been useful to the different Departments carrying on research work on specified subjects for which reference has to be taken in terms of the happenings in the country as well as outside. Sometimes the Department receives queries from Provincial Ministries and other public institutions for collection of authentic news.

PAPERS USED FOR REFERENCE

Large number of daily papers in different languages are received in the office and for reference, a few leading English dailies such as Hindu, Hindustan Times, Hindustan Standard, National Herald, Pioneer, Tribune, Search Light, Hitvada, Assam Tribune, Bombay Chronicle, etc. are systematically used in the Department. It is also essential that clippings from important papers in Indian Languages, especially in Hindi, should be preserved. Of course, attempts are being made to keep in close contact with the papers in Indian Languages such as Aj, Pratap, Navjivan, Vishwa Mitra, Sansar, Tej, Quami Avaz, etc. Besides these, different weeklies specially, other Parties Organs, such as People's Age, Janata, Blitz, Independent India are regularly looked into while the Harijan and other Wardha Publications are maintained in the Library in bound files.

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS NEWS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

It would be helpful if the Provincial Congress Committees also start with the News Information Department for their own use. This would form a convenient agency for communicating Provincial news directy gathered from local papers in Provincial Languages to the A.I.C.C. Office which would be thus in a better position to have at its disposal exhaustive information of the Provinces.

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT

Till 1947 publications brought out by the A.I.C.C. Office were largely meant for free distribution among Provincial Congress Committees, A.I C.C. members and other office-bearers. Extra copies left were sold at nominal prices to individuals who demanded them for reference. No separate account of the income and expenditure of the Publication Department was maintained.

DEPARTMENT RE-ORGANISED IN SEPTEMBER 1947

In Sep. 1947 it was decided to reorganise this department so as to make it self-supporting and, if possible, paying. In pursuance of this decision steps were taken to push the sale of old and new publication Influential newspapers were requested to give a few free insertions of a consolidated list of A I.C.C. publications. The National Herald (Lucknow), Amrit Bazar Patrika (Calcutta and Allahabad), Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), Bombay Chronicle (Bombay), Free Press Journal (Bombay), Indian News Chronicle (Delhi) and Nagpur Times (Nagpur) were helpful in this respect. This had its desired effect in creating widespread demand from the public for our publications. Besides giving publicity through newspapers, arrangements were made for supplying the publications regularly to various book-sellers all over the country and at present about 40 book-sellers are on our list for regular supplies on 'Sale or Return Basis', and it can fairly be expected that more book-sellers are added to the list.

In the financial year 1947-48 a sum of Rs. 14,000/- was realised through sale of publications both old and new.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Since October, 1947, the following publications have been brought out:—

Congress & the Problem of Minorities.
Congress & Labour Movement in India.
Democracy.
Economic Freedom & Economic Planning.
Seva Dal Manual.
Report of the Economic Programme Committee of the A.I.C.C. (In English, Hindi & Urdu.)

Co-operative Commonwealth.

Congress Constitution (in English, Hindi & Urdu).

Indian Political Parties (English & Hindi).

Volunteer Organisation.

Why the Constructive Programme?

Zamindari Abolition & Agrarian Reforms.

Combating Inflation.

One Year of Freedom.

Indian Affairs (Monthly Magazine—Inaugural issue).

Besides the above, 5 issues of Congress Bulletin in English and Hindustani and 2 issues in Urdu have also been published during this period.

It has been found very difficult to bring out our publications in time due to non-availability of good printing presses with moderate charges.

We have to point out with great regret that Congress Committees, Congress Office-bearers including M. L. A's (both Central & Provincial) and A.I.C.C. members do not take as much interest as is expected of them.

STUDENTS DEPARTMENT

As a result of persistent requests made by students and student workers in the various provinces, a Students Department was opened in Madras in May 1947, under the guidance of the A.I.C.C. Shri G. Ramachandran, then Assistant Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, was requested to take charge of the Department from June. He accepted the responsibility to be the Honorary Secretary of the Department and prepared a scheme of work which was approved by the

Allahabad Conference of the Presidents and the Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees.

CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

The first task which the Department undertook was to survey the field and secure contacts with Congress-minded Students in the various provinces in the South. The workers of the Department toured the chief educational centres in the province and explained the aims of the Department to the student groups which had already expressed their desire to work under Congress guidance. Though the original intention was to entrust the work in the North and South to two zonal assistants, the worker who was to take up the work in the North did not join the department, and the work was therefore confined to the Provinces in the South. Shri Achutan, the zonal worker in the South developed valuable contacts with student groups in many important educational centres of Kerala and Tamilnad. These groups tried to conduct regular study classes, some kind of rural service and also individual and collective spinning. Such groups functioned in Trichinopoly, Annamalai, Tinnevelly and Madras in Tamilnad and Calicut, Palghat, Koduvayur and other centres in Kerala.

TRAINING CAMPS

Two training camps were organised at Gandhi Gram, (Madura) during the year, in which over 90 students from the four linguistic provinces of the South received training.

The first camp was held during Christmas 1947 and lasted for 6 weeks. The camp combined a serious study of the revolutionary significance of the constructive programme with actual training in village work, spinning, saphai, self-dependence and camp life. The craft classes were conducted by experts and the trainees underwent a course in carding, slivering and spinning on the Takli and the Charkha. The study classes

attempted to give the trainees a general idea of the synthesis of the non-violent method or revolution, and dealt with the Economics of Khadi and self-sufficiency, Basic Education, the Gandhian revolution—its technique and philosophy, 'A Satyagrah Social order—its significance and its possibilites', the History of the Students Movement in India and other countries etc. The trainees were then organised into batches which toured the surrounding villages for two weeks and carried on literacy and sanitation work.

All these had succeeded in preparing the ground for more intense work. With the beginning of this academic year, many new centres have been created, and the centres which existed during the last year have been activized. Regular study classes are being conducted at many of these centres, and active student groups have also undertaken rural work, adult literacy work and individual and collective spinning.

Though the department has not been able to do anything spectacular, there can be no doubt that the work has been started on the right lines and is developing fast in the provinces of the South. It was unfortunate that the department could not start its work in the North, though there were persistent demands for extending the work to the provinces in the North as well.

EXTENSION OF THE SCOPE OF WORK

As a result of the enthusiastic response received from the students and youths and with a view to keeping up the continuity of our work it has been decided to extend the scope of this work. It has been felt that the changed circumstances in the country after the achievement of independence have made it necessary for the Congress to secure more vital links with the youth of the country and to harness them in the constructive tasks of nation building.

COLLABORATION WITH VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

It has therefore been suggested that the Student Department should work in close collaboration with the Volunteer Department of the Congress and have a systematic programme to develop a healthy and constructive youth movement in the country. Such a movement should take on hand the all-round development of youth, and should attempt to take charge of the child and develop its personality in all directions, physical, intellectual, moral, civic and political. "It will certainly attempt to make every youngman a better and more efficient man in his profession and in the service of society to build up character, efficiency, discipline, courage, alertness to life and the qualities of leadership. These can be developed only through a day to day programme of work, and the department will therefore try to train up youth through patient and systematic constructive work."

PROVINCIAL WORKERS TO MEET AT JAIPUR

A reorganised programme of work has therefore been drawn up and it is hoped that work in that line would be started without delay. To facilitate the organisation of the work in the Provinces and to coordinate the work of the Department it has been decided to convene a meeting of a few provincial workers at Jaipur during the days of the Congress Session. It is hoped that this meeting will enable the work to develop in a systematic and fruitful way as outlined above.

The Students Department has started functioning in the A.I.C.C. Secretariat from November, 1948.

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